

High blood pressure problems largely misunderstood by sufferers

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The distrust of healthcare providers shown by people with high blood pressure impedes effective treatment, as emphasized in a new study published in *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*. In a systematic review and metasynthesis of eleven qualitative studies published between 2000 and 2005, including more than 500 patients, significant and problematic differences were identified in beliefs about the presence of symptoms, the need to take medications for the rest of one's life, and race-specific treatment plans.

High blood pressure is a common but serious health problem that affects nearly one-third of all adults in the United States. It can be controlled, though not cured, through lifestyle changes and the use of medications, which must be continued for life. Because of the need for long-term treatment, it is essential that patients and healthcare professionals work together to fight the disease. This synthesis of qualitative studies provides valuable information that will assist healthcare providers to better understand and manage conflicts between healthcare provider and patient perspectives of this condition.

“In the presence of ineffective partnering, differences between lay and professional beliefs about hypertension result in inadequate management of the disease,” says study author Pam Schlomann, highlighting the need for greater cooperation in combating high blood pressure.

Source: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

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