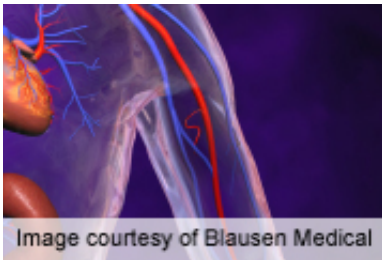


Volunteer work cuts risk of hypertension in older adults

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Older adults who volunteer at least 200 hours over a one-year period and have normal blood pressure are less likely than non-volunteers to develop hypertension four years later, according to research published in the June issue of *Psychology & Aging*.

(HealthDay)—Older adults who volunteer at least 200 hours over a one-year period and have normal blood pressure are less likely than non-volunteers to develop hypertension four years later, according to research published in the June issue of *Psychology & Aging*.

Rodlescia S. Sneed and Sheldon Cohen, Ph.D., from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, reviewed data from the 2006 and 2010 waves of the Health and Retirement Study, a longitudinal panel survey involving community-dwelling adults older than 50 years. Volunteerism habits and blood pressure were recorded at baseline and four years later.

The researchers found that, after excluding individuals with hypertension

at baseline and adjusting for age, race, sex, educational level, baseline systolic and diastolic blood pressure, and major chronic illnesses, older adults who had spent at least 200 hours doing volunteer work during the 12 months prior to baseline were significantly less likely to develop hypertension four years later compared to those who did not do volunteer work (odds ratio, 0.60). No association between volunteer work and risk of hypertension was observed for lesser time commitments. Larger increases in psychological well-being and physical activity also were significantly linked to at least 200 hours of volunteer participation in a year, but these factors did not explain the lower risk of developing hypertension.

"Those who volunteer 200 hours or more per year (roughly four hours per week) were 40 percent less likely to develop [hypertension](#) over a four-year follow-up of a sample of community-dwelling [older adults](#)," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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