

National heart organizations join to combat the global hypertension epidemic

May 19 2014

It's estimated that more than 970 million people have hypertension¹ and, globally, the disease is responsible for more than nine million deaths every year, making it one of the leading causes of death worldwide. In an effort to help manage the epidemic, leading scientists from the American Society of Hypertension (ASH), American Heart Association (AHA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) convened a joint panel to discuss a global project aiming to improve the treatment and control of hypertension worldwide.

The joint session, entitled Global Blood Pressure Control Through a Shared Strategy: The Global Standardized Hypertension Treatment Project, held on May 18, is part of the 29th Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Society of Hypertension.

Rates of hypertension have increased in both developed and developing nations, due, in part, to the world's aging population and lifestyles that include high salt diets and low physical activity. While prevention is key, acting quickly to control raised [blood pressure](#) through medical treatment will help save lives of people currently living with the condition.

The project is a collaboration between the CDC, the Pan American Health Organization, and other regional and global stakeholders, who have been working to identify a core set of medications appropriate to treat adults with hypertension, as well as cost-effective strategies for availability of medications and patient care delivery. It builds upon

lessons learned and best practices for the clinical management of hypertension, and aims to make it possible for other audiences of clinicians, healthcare administrators and decision-makers to improve [blood pressure control](#) in their communities.

The co-chairs of the scientific meeting are Drs. Sonia Y. Angell, M.D., M.P.H. of CDC Atlanta, Ga. and Donald J. DiPette, M.D. of Columbia, S.C. Highlights from the Joint Scientific Session Included:

- Global Standardization of Hypertension Treatment Project: A Call to Action, presented by Donald J. DiPette, M.D.
- Achieving Population Blood Pressure Control: Strategy and Implementation, presented by Brent M. Egan, M.D., FASH, Greenville, S.C.
- Moving Forward in the Americas, presented by Trevor Hassell, K.A., G.C.M., M.B.B.S., F.R.C.P., F.A.C.C., St. Michael, Barbados
- Where Do We Go From Here, presented by Sonia Y. Angell, M.D., M.P.H.

"Hypertension is so pervasive worldwide that the development and implementation of a global public health initiative could eventually help prevent millions of premature deaths," explained Dominic Sica, M.D., ASH President-Elect and 2014 ASH Scientific Program Committee Chair.

"Hypertension affects nearly one in three adults and kills more people around the world than anything else. It is both too common and too often poorly controlled, but we can change this," said CDC Director Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. "This project shares an evidence-based approach that simplifies care, increases control, and can save lives. Working together to share and implement best practices, we can reduce the risk for heart attack and stroke, and help people live longer, healthier lives."

"The American Heart Association is delighted to once again collaborate with major stakeholders in the war against the deadly disease of hypertension. Concerted efforts to deliver effective therapy to a global population can be successful in reducing premature deaths and disability for millions of people," said Mariell Jessup, M.D., American Heart Association president.

Due to such high global prevalence of hypertension, improving population-wide [hypertension](#) control is a public health imperative that may help reduce overall mortality and disability associated with cardiovascular disease and stroke.

Provided by Pollock Communications

Citation: National heart organizations join to combat the global hypertension epidemic (2014, May 19) retrieved 27 July 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-05-national-heart-combat-global-hypertension.html>

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