

Hypertension may increase risk of developing epilepsy

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Hypertension may double an adult's risk of developing epilepsy, according to a new study published in *Epilepsia*.

In the study of 2,986 U.S. adults with an average age of 58 years, 55 new cases of epilepsy were identified during an average follow-up of 19

years. Hypertension, defined as presence of elevated blood pressure or use of antihypertensive medications, was linked to a nearly 2-fold higher risk of epilepsy. After excluding participants with normal [blood pressure](#) on antihypertensive medications, [hypertension](#) was linked to a 2.44-times higher risk of epilepsy.

"Our study shows that hypertension, a common, modifiable, vascular risk factor, is an independent predictor of epilepsy in older age," said co-lead author Maria Stefanidou, MD, MSc, of Boston University School of Medicine. "Even though [epidemiological studies](#) can only show association and not causation, this observation may help identify subgroups of patients who will benefit from targeted, aggressive hypertension management and encourage performance of dedicated clinical studies that will focus on early interventions to reduce the burden of [epilepsy](#) in older age."

More information: Maria Stefanidou et al, Vascular risk factors as predictors of epilepsy in older age: The Framingham Heart Study, *Epilepsia* (2021). [DOI: 10.1111/epi.17108](https://doi.org/10.1111/epi.17108)

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