

Two-thirds of people failing to take treatment for high blood pressure in former Soviet Union

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New research has found that treatment of hypertension has failed to improve in the last decade in the countries of the former Soviet Union. Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is one of the leading causes of avoidable deaths in the former Soviet Union.

The study, published in the [Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health](#), included over 18,400 participants in 2001 and over 17,900 participants in 2010/11 from [Armenia](#), Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine.

Researchers led by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, found that in 2010/11, 68% of participants failed to take medication daily, only slightly down from 74% in 2001. Young men who smoke and drink alcohol were those least likely to be following treatment.

High rates of [hypertension](#) have remained steady in the former Soviet Union, in contrast to the decline seen in Western Europe in recent years.

Lead author, Bayard Roberts, Lecturer in Public Health at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, said: "Over two-thirds of those diagnosed with, and treated for, hypertension in the former Soviet Union are not taking their treatment regularly, leading to potentially serious consequences for their long-term health."

"Our study has uncovered the scale of the problem regarding treatment and it requires an urgent response – there needs to be a dramatic scaling up of regular treatment for hypertension in these countries."

Possible reasons cited for poor treatment include problems with prescribing medication, lack of money to buy medication, poor access to health services and a low awareness around the need to regularly take medication. The authors have called for further research to understand prescription patterns, why individuals are not sticking to their treatment, and to address health system barriers in the region.

More information: Roberts B, Stickley A, Balabanova D, Haerpfner C, McKee M (2012). The persistence of irregular treatment of hypertension in the former Soviet Union. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* [doi:10.1136/jech-2011-200645](https://doi.org/10.1136/jech-2011-200645)

Provided by London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

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