

Hypertension in Thailand: A Message from the Thai Hypertension Society on World Hypertension Day 2017

Weranuj Roubasanthisuk MD^{1,2}, Songkwan Silaruks MD^{2,3}, Vuddhidej Ophascharoensuk MD^{2,4}, Chawin Sirinak MD⁵, Pussadee Phrommayon MD⁵

¹ Division of Hypertension, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand

² The Steering Committee of Thai Hypertension Society

³ Division of Cardiology, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand

⁴ Division of Nephrology, Department of Internal Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Thailand

⁵ Health Department, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Bangkok, Thailand

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The Thai Hypertension Society is a member of the World Hypertension League [WHL], which is an organization that is dedicated to the prevention and control of hypertension [HT] around the world. The WHL developed and promotes World Hypertension Day [WHD] to increase public awareness of HT. The promotional theme of WHD between 2013 and 2018 is 'Know Your Numbers'. Member organizations of the WHL are encouraged to perform blood pressure [BP] measurement in their respective patient populations during the month leading up to WHD, which is on May 17 of each year, with a goal of 3 million BP measurements taken globally between April 17 and May 17, 2017. Accordingly, the Thai Hypertension Society arranged and promoted BP measurement

events at four participating regional medical centers in Thailand. BP measurement data were collected from subjects who visited one of these centers during the designated period. During the 1-month HT evaluation period, 21,379 people had their BP measured, of whom 29% had no prior diagnosis of HT and 71% had known HT. Among the cases with no history of HT, 16.4% had BP of 140/90 mmHg or greater. Only 1% of known hypertensive cases were on lifestyle modification and half of them had BP of less than 140/90 mmHg. Among those on BP-lowering drugs, 57.8% had BP of less than 140/90mmHg (Table 1).

Approximately three-quarters of cases screened between April 17 and May 17, 2017 had elevated BP, including those with known HT and those with

Table 1. Number of cases from each participating organization stratified by presence or absence of previous diagnosis of hypertension, type of anti-HT treatment, and result of anti-HT medication treatment

Participating organizations	Number of cases	No prior diagnosis of HT		Lifestyle modification only	Known HT	
		BP <140/90 mmHg	BP ≥140/90 mmHg		On anti-HT medications BP <140/90 mmHg	BP ≥140/90 mmHg
Siriraj Hospital	1,000	477 (85.0)	84 (15.0)	25 (6.0)	226 (54.6)	188 (45.4)
Srinagarind Hospital	4,705	1,616 (99.2)	13 (0.8)	1 (0.03)	1,679 (54.6)	1,396 (45.4)
Maharaj Nakorn Chiang Mai Hospital	4,032	1,656 (84.7)	298 (15.3)	27 (1.3)	1,240 (60.5)	811 (39.5)
Health Department, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration	11,642	1,436 (69.7)	624 (30.3)	92 (1.0)	5,543 (58.4)	3,947 (41.6)
Total	21,379	5,185 (83.6)	1,019 (16.4)	145 (1.0)	8,688 (57.8)	6,342 (42.2)

BP = blood pressure; HT = hypertension

Data presented as number and percentage

Correspondence to:

Roubasanthisuk W. Division of Hypertension, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University, 2 Wang Lang Road, Bangkoknoi, Bangkok 10700, Thailand.

Phone: +66-2-4197790-1

Email: weranuj.rou@mahidol.ac.th

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undiagnosed HT with BP of 140/90 mmHg or higher. However, only 4.8% of hypertensive cases in the present study were unaware of their elevated BP problem. The fifth Thai National Health Examination Survey [NHES V], which was performed in 2014, revealed an HT prevalence rate in adult population aged 15 years or older of 24.7%, and an unawareness rate of HT of around 45%. Since the BP measurement activities in this study were conducted in a hospital or clinic setting, the percentage of HT should be significantly higher than in the general population. In addition, most of our hypertensive cases are aware of

their problem and are receiving treatment. However, the rate of uncontrolled BP among those receiving BP-lowering medications in the present study remained quite high considering that around half of our cases received their care at one of three university hospitals.

The results of this evaluative and educational initiative in a large population of hypertensive patients in Thailand demonstrated that awareness of HT among people who visited a hospital or clinic is higher than the level of awareness in the general population and that strategies to improve BP control in Thai hypertensive population are really needed.