

Abstract

Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices Regarding Hypertension Prevention Among Medical Students: A Cross-Sectional Study at Agostinho Neto University

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Introduction: Hypertension is a chronic medical condition characterized by persistently elevated blood pressure and is the most important modifiable risk factor for cardiovascular disease. It is one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide and is considered a major public health problem. Effective management depends not only on medical treatment but also on knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to hypertension prevention among future healthcare professionals. **Objective:** To assess the level of knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding hypertension prevention among medical students at Agostinho Neto University. **Methods:** An observational, cross-sectional, quantitative and qualitative study was conducted among medical students at Agostinho Neto University, including 213 participants enrolled from the second to the sixth year of medical school. The study used a structured questionnaire addressing sociodemographic characteristics, knowledge, attitudes, and practices. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations. **Results:** The mean age of participants was 22.4 ± 3.39 years, and 59.4% were female. Most students demonstrated a good level of knowledge about hypertension, recognizing its causes, clinical diagnosis, complications, and the need for continuous medication use (73.7%). A total of 98.1% recognized that the disease is not transmissible, 88.2% stated that it has no cure, and 84.5% correctly identified hypertension as being characterized by blood pressure levels $\geq 140/90$ mmHg. Furthermore, 94.8% correctly stated that the medication dose should not be doubled after a missed dose, and 70.4% described appropriate blood pressure measurement procedures. Attitudes were generally positive, particularly regarding the commitment to avoiding a sedentary lifestyle and maintaining mental health. **Conclusion:** Medical students demonstrated a good level of knowledge and appropriate practices regarding hypertension prevention, although some gaps remain, particularly concerning the continuous use of antihypertensive medications and proper blood pressure measurement procedures. Future studies should expand the sample to include other institutions and regions and adopt longitudinal methodologies to assess changes in health-related behaviors over time.