

HYPERTENSION-A RISK FACTOR

Hypertension, commonly known as high blood pressure, is a chronic medical condition characterized by elevated blood pressure levels persistently exceeding the normal range. It is a significant risk factor for various cardiovascular diseases, including heart attack, stroke, heart failure, and kidney disease. Understanding hypertension, its causes, effects, and management strategies, is crucial for maintaining optimal health and reducing the risk of associated complications.

Blood pressure is the force exerted by circulating blood against the walls of blood vessels. It is typically expressed in millimeters of mercury (mmHg) and consists of two measurements: systolic pressure (the pressure during heartbeats) and diastolic pressure (the pressure when the heart is at rest between beats). Normal blood pressure is generally considered to be around 120/80 mmHg. Hypertension is diagnosed when blood pressure consistently measures 130/80 mmHg or higher.

Hypertension can arise from various factors, including genetic predisposition, lifestyle choices, and underlying medical conditions. Some common risk factors for hypertension include:

Unhealthy Diet: Consuming excessive salt, saturated fats, cholesterol, and processed foods can contribute to hypertension.

Lack of Physical Activity: Sedentary lifestyles with minimal exercise increase the risk of hypertension.

Obesity: Being overweight or obese puts additional strain on the cardiovascular system, leading to elevated blood pressure.

Smoking and Alcohol Consumption: Tobacco use and excessive alcohol intake can raise blood pressure levels. Stress: Chronic stress can trigger temporary spikes in blood pressure, contributing to long-term hypertension. Age and Family History: Hypertension becomes more prevalent with age, and individuals with a family history of hypertension are at higher risk. Underlying Health Conditions: Conditions such as diabetes, kidney disease, hormonal disorders, and sleep apnea can contribute to hypertension.

Persistent hypertension can lead to severe health complications, affecting various organs and systems in the body: Cardiovascular Diseases: Hypertension is a leading cause of heart disease, increasing the risk of heart attack, coronary artery disease, and heart failure. Stroke: High blood pressure damages blood vessels in the brain, increasing the risk of stroke (either ischemic or hemorrhagic). Kidney Damage: Elevated blood pressure can impair kidney function and lead to chronic kidney disease or kidney failure. Vision Problems: Hypertension can damage blood vessels in the eyes, causing vision impairment or even blindness. Peripheral Artery Disease: Reduced blood flow due to narrowed arteries can lead to peripheral artery disease, causing leg pain and increasing the risk of amputation. Cognitive Decline: Chronic hypertension is associated with an increased risk of vascular dementia and cognitive decline in older adults. Diagnosing hypertension typically involves multiple blood pressure measurements taken over time. Additionally, healthcare providers may recommend various tests and assessments to identify underlying causes and assess the extent of organ damage. Regular blood pressure monitoring and periodic health check-ups are essential for individuals with hypertension to monitor their condition and prevent complications.

SHOOTING THE MESSENGER

■ K V SEETHARAMAIAH

AIICC President Mallikarjuna Kharge has been gnashing his teeth at the Election Commission (EC) alleging that the delay in releasing voter turnout data was an attempt to manipulate the final results. Congress and other opposition parties have cast aspersions on CBI, ED, NCW and now EC. NCW has not been spared for saying "no victim has reached out to register complaint against Prajwal Revanna". Even Supreme Court has not been spared. Congress has been shooting the messenger for its plight to be in power in less number of states than BJP. Negative campaigning has boomeranged the Congress party in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections. What can EC do if the majority of voters reject any party? What is the use of blaming the mirror for showing us and showing to us as we are? The EC has expressed its annoyance at the conduct of the Congress President Mallikarjuna Kharge for impeding the conduct of free and fair elections. He had also expressed apprehensions about potential attempts to manipulate the final results. All these apprehensions by the Congress chief show that he has conceded defeat even before polling is going to complete. In the event of Congress losing the election, Kharge may say that he had already predicted and expressed that the poll was not free and fair. He sees the credibility of the Election at an all-time low. The EC has rebutted the charge levelled by Kharge. It has reportedly written an unprecedented letter to Kharge claiming that his (Kharge's) doubts will be held with contempt by the people. The poll body has found that the statements articulated by Kharge were aimed at pushing a biased narrative. I.N.D.I.A. bloc has locked horn with EC. Probably the performance of the parties in I.N.D.I.A. in the elections held so far seems to have disheartened the constituents of the bloc. The I.N.D.I.A. bloc has been pestering for action against Modi for his 'hate speech'. A delegation of the opposition parties with 7-page memorandum has reportedly met the EC with its allegations raised by Kharge urging action against Modi. TMC leader Derek O'Brien has also insisted that action be taken against Modi and Shah. He has alleged that the EC listens but does nothing. How can EC act just to please the political opponents of Modi? Constructive criticism by the opposition has taken a back seat. If every criticism is to be considered as 'hate speech', then there will be no one on whom no action can be taken. Congress needs to set its own house in order before urging for action against Modi. Maharashtra Congress President Nana Patole has kicked up a controversy saying that if I.N.D.I.A. comes to power, it will purify the Ram temple. Those who said that Lord Ram was imaginary figure and those who did not attend to the Ram Mandir consecration ceremony in Ayodhya are talking of purifying the temple. He says that the four Shankaracharyas purify the temple. If these Shankaracharyas want the temple purified, the words have to come from them, not from politicians. If the Shankaracharyas want the temple purified it can be done even without I.N.D.I.A. bloc coming into power. Unnecessarily their name is being dragged to the dirty politics. Congress which wants action against Modi has not taken any action against Supriya Srinathe who asked the 'rate card' of Kangana Raut. WB Congress President Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury has backed the remarks of Pitroda. Congress which has disowned his remarks has not taken any action against Adhir for backing Pitroda. Rahul Gandhi has made wild charge against Modi. He says women are bearing brunt of PM's tacit support to criminals. Baseless allegations do not take anybody to greater height. If the allegation is true, Rahul must prove it. The opposition parties are dreaded of Modi because of his soaring popularity earned by his hard work. They are sparing no efforts to weaken Modi. As a last resort, it was petitioned to disqualify Modi from contesting the election but the Delhi High Court rejected the plea. Over 95 per cent of the legal battle fought by the opposition parties against the Modi government has been lost. Frustrated by defeat in the legal battle one after the other, Congress and its allied parties are finding fault with the EC. This does not bode well.

■ SHYAM SUDAN

Education is the only powerful tool to civilized the super creation of God I.e humans. All the advancement we see in the world today is due to spread of education. Without education there is no difference between humans and other lower creatures. In India we have a very enriched and incredible history of knowledge. Once there was a time we were considered as world superpower of the world in term of our education and knowledge glory. Our old age texts I.e vedas ,upanishads and other valuable books were filled with knowledge of all fields of life .Basically these enriched texts of our past gives direction and way to us and entire humanity to live a prosperous and contented life .But with the change in time and due to influence of westernization of knowledge we have seen a drastic change in present time .After the independence we have framed lot of education policies for the welfare of our modern generation. But there is a popular saying that change is the law of nature. And this dictum works equally for education too .Those methods and policies whom we have firmed faith in those time I.e during their formation, now we have felt that those are outdated and obsolete one in current scenario. No doubt knowledge remains the same in all era but the ways and methods of its execution changed as per the need and expectations of present time zone .Now our traditional method of imparting knowledge has been changed. Once there was a time when we consider that guru or teacher was the ultimate source of knowledge for everyone. But now with the advancement in technology and digitilization of everything all the things have changed. Now there are many sources of knowledge for the knowledge seekers. During covid pandemic when there was no formal schooling available for us ,we have learnt lot of other methods of imparting knowledge .I.e digital learning. Now our country is in the developing phase of history. There are lot of challenges are waiting for us in our future. What are the challenges for our future education ,is a burning issue for us in present time .At present we are focussing on online learning process. No doubt it is the need of the hour to adopt this method of imparting knowledge,

because we can connect with millions of learners at any corner of the country. Moreover well planned and targeted knowledge can be spread through this medium of learning. But there are few hurdles in method of learning as well .Because there is need of well furnished Iet lab ,sophisticated digital devices and rapid internet connectivity. Topographically, in India we have a great challenge in our future to make provision for this method of imparting education. Because there is need of considerable funds and infrastructure, especially in rural areas still there is very limited scope of this method of learning.No doubt online method of teaching is very important and mandatory at present time .but we can't ignore our traditional method of teaching totally. It is also a great challenge for us in future to go with two ways of teaching and make a comfortable alignment with two .

The next great challenge for our future education is to protect our moral based education system. No doubt we have achieved great milestone in spreading the literacy in our population. But sidewise we have seen that we have lost our moral values from our education system. Our prime focus was to increase the percentage of literacy rate but in ignorance we have failed in achieving the best side of education. It is a bitter reality that we have millions of literary persons in our country but very limited number of educated one .Due to more focus on our literacy side we are continuously producing smart hackers, fraudsters,smart corrupt manpower and morally dead lot .it is due ignorance in our moral based education. No doubt online method can attract the millions of learners in a fraction of time but we can't develop moral values in those learners through that method of learning. There is an age old saying that "guru bin gati na hoye " only guru and morally equipped teacher can change the mindset of learners through traditional method of teaching. With simulation and digitally demonstrated way we can't imbibe this virtue I.e mortality in our future generation.

Another challenge for our future education is to implement the skill based education in our young generation. Because at present we are giving priority to only competitive aspects of exams. But in future we

need skilled and trained educated persons for our nation.now we have to focus on new skill based education as per our future requirements and needs .our traditional skills are now outdated one ,because the need and demand of our society is new and advance one .we have to focus on Digital and technology based skill education. However in our new education policy we are giving stress to this need .The main focus and priority of our new education policy is also the same and it is designed as per the future need of our country. But ,it takes many more years for proper implementation and in its execution.

Another great challenge for our future education is to how we can reduce the burden of expense of higher education. Mostly ,in our country it is somewhat difficult for common man to pursue the higher education due to its cost burden .It is great challenge for us and for our future generation, because we know there is a great percentage of our population who have not proper financial background. Mostly knowledge seekers and talented people can not afford the facilities for higher education due to their poor financial background. Moreover, nepotism and favoritism is also an another challenge for us in every era .

Another problem for us in near future is burden of our reservation policies. No doubt reservation is good for downtrodden and having not section of our society. But ,now a days we have designed the culture of this reservation in almost every section of society. This will going to be a great hurdle for us in near future and also a great challenge for our education system.

The next biggest challenge for our future education system is to give employment and job opportunities to our educated youths.However ultimate aim of education is to get the salvation and escape from the cycle of birth and rebirth as per our religious belief. But in current materialistic society we relate the success of education with employment engagement of the learners.Because we know millions of students are waiting for employment in our country. Now in future their numbers will increase in geometric ratio ,then it will be a great challenge for us to engage this manpower to work as per their dignity and status.

Another great challenge for us in our future education is to meet the require-

ments of expertise and learned scholars, teachers and guide .Because at present we have seen that there is scarcity of expertise faculty in different levels of our education sectors. In this changing teaching and learning era there is need of well trained and professional expertise manpower to guide our budding generation. Because at present the need, aspirations and demand of our modern learners is different than our old age time .Brain draining is another challenge in this direction. We should work on this side to stop the brain draining of our intellectual class .more opportunities and job security can change the mindset of our intellectual in this direction. There is an urgent need to inculcate the values of nationalism and patriotism in the minds and vision of our educated youth.this is possible only with the right and value based education in future. Our plan and policies must be in such a way that there is enriched sources and texts of these value oriented teachings in our books .for that there s need of change in our books and other literature. Especially, if we avoid distorted history presentation in our future only then we can give a proper and authentic knowledge to our young generation. Political influence in our higher education institutions is also a great hurdle for us .more autonomous status can be given in this direction to our institutions of higher level .

Another big challenge for us in our future education system is selection of language formula for our learners. Still we are in dilemma regarding the selection of language formula. No doubt hindi language is our mother tongue, but we are continuously giving stress to foreign language I.e English. Still our mindset is that if anyone make communication in English language we think he / she is very intelligent. Contrary to this if someone has more talent and expertise in his field ,but a poor communicator in foreign language we generally ignore his performance.

No doubt challenges are many for us in future, but our strong determination and selection of appropriate policies can change the condition in our favour. A strong and committed political will is also needed in this direction to change the condition.

"Measure tour Blood Pressure accurately, control it, and live longer"

■ SURJIT SINGH FLORA

The term "silent killer" refers to the fact that hypertension often manifests itself without any obvious indications or symptoms occurring. In the event that it is not under control, it might result in major problems such as heart disease and stroke. Changes in lifestyle and regular monitoring of blood pressure are essential components in the management of hypertension. If you want specialized advice, you should talk to a healthcare practitioner.

May 17th marks the annual celebration of World Hypertension Day. This global awareness initiative seeks to educate and increase awareness about hypertension, including its prevention and management. Participating in events and campaigns on this day can help raise awareness for heart health on a global scale.

The World Hypertension League has declared "Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, and Live Longer" as the World Hypertension Day theme for 2024.

High blood pressure is a problem that many people are suffering from these days. Rapidly changing lifestyle and wrong eating habits are making people prone to many problems nowadays, one of which is high blood pressure. It is commonly called the silent killer because the person suffering from it is often unaware of its symptoms.

However, it is very important to recognize it because high BP can lead to many serious health problems, including heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, etc. In such a situation, with the aim of spreading awareness about this problem, World Hypertension Day (World Hypertension Day 2024) is observed on 17 May every year. On this occasion, in this article, we will tell you about 6 such hidden symptoms of high blood pressure, with the help of which you can identify hypertension.

If symptoms do arise, they may manifest as early morning headaches, nosebleeds, irregular heart rhythms, vision changes, and buzzing in the ears. Severe hypertension may lead to symptoms such as fatigue, nausea, vomiting, confusion, anxiety, chest pain, and muscle tremors. It's important to note that high blood pressure often goes unnoticed, as it typically doesn't present any warning signs or symptoms. Consequently, a significant number of individuals remain unaware of their condition. It is essential to measure your blood pressure in order to determine if you have high blood pressure.

High blood pressure, often known as hypertension, is a disorder that is defined by a pressure of the blood on the walls of the arteries that is persistently greater than what is considered normal throughout periods of time. It is believed that more than one billion individuals throughout the globe are affected by this condition, which is a significant risk factor for cardiovascular disease and stroke. However, it is thought that high blood pressure is the consequence of a mix of variables that might include lifestyle, genetics, and environmental factors. The specific cause of high blood pressure is unclear yet. Some aspects of one's lifestyle might be a contributor to high blood pressure. An unhealthy diet, a lack of physical exercise, smoking, and drinking an excessive amount of alcohol are all factors that might raise the likelihood of developing hypertension. It is possible that a poor diet might raise the risk by encouraging the accumulation of plaque in the arteries. Plaque can cause the arteries to become more constricted, which in turn can contribute to a rise in blood pressure. Additionally, consuming an excessive amount of salt may contribute to a rise in blood pressure by causing the body to retain fluid, which in turn can result in an increase in the volume of blood that is flowing through the arteries.

One of the factors that might contribute to high blood pressure is genetics. An elevation in blood pressure may be the result of a particular genetic mutation or abnormality. Furthermore, some racial and ethnic groups, as well as families, may have a higher probability of getting



hypertension, which may be the result of specific hereditary variables.

Last but not least, environmental variables are another potential contributor to high blood pressure. Certain pollutants, such as air pollution, may be a contributor to an increased chance of developing hypertension. Another factor that might contribute to an increased likelihood of developing hypertension is the presence of certain medical diseases, such as renal disease.

There are other risk factors that might increase the likelihood of developing hypertension, in addition to the existing risk factors. Some of these factors include age, gender, color, and the history of the family. As one gets older, the likelihood of developing hypertension also rises, making aging a significant risk factor. Men are more prone to acquire hypertension than women, which is another aspect that plays a role in the condition. The fact that African Americans are more prone to suffer from hypertension than people of other races is moreover a factor that may play a role. Lastly, a history of hypertension in the family might also be a factor that increases the risk. The illness known as high blood pressure is a severe one that, if left untreated, may result in potentially life-threatening health repercussions. In order to lower your risk, it is essential to be aware of the variables that put you at risk and to take measures to mitigate those risks. These measures include leading a healthy lifestyle, eating a balanced diet, engaging in regular physical activity, and avoiding smoking and drinking excessive amounts of alcohol. In addition to this, it is essential to schedule regular checkups with your physician in order to accurately monitor your blood pressure and ensure that any underlying medical disorders are being treated in the appropriate manner.

Vision problems: High blood pressure causes long-term damage to the blood pressure in the eyes, which can cause blurred vision, double vision or sudden vision loss. High BP can also damage the retina, which is called hypertensive retinopathy. If left untreated, it can lead to serious vision problems.

Bleeding from the nose: It's not common, but in some people, frequent nosebleeds can be a sign of high blood pressure. Due to high blood pressure, the small, delicate blood vessels in the nose can burst more easily, leading to frequent nosebleeds.

Difficulty in breathing: High blood pressure can put strain on your heart because high BP makes it harder for your heart to pump blood easily. This can cause fluid to accumulate in the lungs and cause difficulty breathing.

Fatigue: Constant fatigue can also be a sign of high blood pressure. This happens because hypertension affects the heart's ability to pump blood properly, reducing the supply of oxygen and nutrients to the brain and other vital organs.

Irregular heartbeat: An irregular or fast heartbeat, called an arrhythmia, can be a sign of high blood pressure. The heart rhythm may be abnormal because the heart has to work harder to pump blood.

What are the risks associated with high blood pressure?

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is often referred to as the "silent killer." This indicates that it lacks any noticeable symptoms and can remain untreated for an extended period, resulting in various significant health hazards. When left untreated, a blood pressure reading of 180/120 or higher can lead to a significant risk of mortality within a year, typically resulting in an average survival time of around ten months. If left untreated, high blood pressure can have serious consequences such as heart attack, stroke, blindness, and kidney disease.

Time to say goodbye to the past

Since 2003, the guidelines for diagnosing and treating high blood pressure have been:

Average: below 120/80 mm Hg

Pre-hypertensive individuals have systolic blood pressure readings between 120-139 or diastolic readings between 80-89. This falls under stage 1 hypertension. Hypertension is classified as stage 2 when the systolic blood pressure ranges from 140-159 or the diastolic blood pressure ranges from 90-99. Hypertension is diagnosed when the systolic blood pressure is 160 or higher, or the diastolic blood pressure is 100 or higher.

Hypertensive crisis occurs when the systolic blood pressure reaches 180 or higher, or the diastolic blood pressure reaches 110 or higher.

The guidelines were revised in November 2017 by the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology. Here are the following:

Normal blood pressure is typically less than 120/80 mm Hg, while elevated blood pressure refers to higher readings. With a systolic reading between 120-129 and a diastolic reading less than 80, this falls into the stage 1 category. Hypertension is diagnosed when the systolic blood pressure is between 130-139 or the diastolic blood pressure is between 80-89. This falls under stage 2 hypertension. Hypertension is characterized by a systolic blood pressure of at least 140 mm Hg or a diastolic blood pressure of at least 90 mm Hg.

This condition, known as hypertensive crisis, occurs when the systolic blood pressure exceeds 180 and/or the diastolic blood pressure exceeds 120. In such cases, patients may require immediate adjustments to their medication if there are no other indications of issues. However, if there are signs of organ damage, immediate hospitalization is necessary.

What sets them apart?

One notable change in the guidelines is the removal of the "pre-hypertension" category. Research studies have revealed that complications may arise even when blood pressure is within the range of 130-139 over 80-89.

The categories have been modified by the new guidelines. The readings that were once considered pre-hypertension are now classified as stage I hypertension. By taking action sooner, individuals can receive treatment that may prevent further rises in blood pressure and reduce the risk of developing more severe complications linked to hypertension.

What is the significance of falling into the new guidelines?

This new set of guidelines is expected to result in approximately 14 percent of the population being categorized as having hypertension. It is worth noting that a significant portion of these individuals may be younger in age. Nevertheless, only a small fraction will necessitate the use of medication. People who are now classified as hypertensive will be provided with more proactive prevention interventions, such as making changes to their lifestyle.

This article is for general informational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice.

(The writer is a veteran journalist and freelance writer based in Brampton).