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AWARENESS OF HYPERTENSION AND SELF-CARE BEHAVIORS TO PREVENT HYPERTENSION

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ABSTRACT

Hypertension, also called the “silent killer,” is affecting more than 1.13 billion people with its fatal consequences: heart attack, stroke, kidney failure to coronary artery disease, making it a major cause of premature death worldwide. In Thailand, the overall prevalence of hypertension increased from 21% in 2003 to 25% in 2014. However, plenty of people do not realize their risk of hypertension and cannot prevent themselves from hypertension. This study aimed to explore people’s awareness regarding hypertension risk and their self-care behaviors to prevent hypertension. The cross-sectional online survey was used. The questionnaire was constructed by the researcher and content validity was checked by experts. It consisted of general information, risk factors for hypertension, awareness of hypertension, self-care behaviors to prevent hypertension and knowledge about possible complications of hypertension. There were 428 responses from participants aged above 18 to beyond 60. Most of the participants were female and aged between 41-50 years old, followed by 18-30 years old. For the risk of hypertension, 50.2% of the participants have BMI over the normal range, 58.9% have family history with hypertension, 8.6% have diabetes, 24.1% have lipidemia, 42.1% have moderate to severe stress, 53.3% drink alcohol, and 14.5% are cigarette smokers. When analyzing the actual risk of hypertension versus perceived risk by the participants, 21.3% of them perceived that they have lower risk than their actual risk they have. As for awareness regarding hypertension’s consequences, complications caused to the brain such as hemorrhagic stroke, ischemic stroke, and cerebral aneurysm are better known among the participants, compared to the problems of kidney and heart diseases. Over two thirds of the participants tried to control their weight, 59.1% exercised regularly, and 51.4% consumed a low salt diet, whereas 11.7% had not taken care of themselves to prevent hypertension. In conclusion, many of the participants have some awareness of hypertension risk, but not enough for them to take serious actions. Therefore, health literacy should be promoted, and self-care behavior should be encouraged to prevent risks that can cause hypertension among the people.

Keywords: hypertension, awareness of hypertension, health risk