



TREATING HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE IN THE ELDERLY



High blood pressure, or hypertension, greatly increases the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke.

As we get older, and our blood vessels become stiffer, our blood pressure tends to go up, putting us at greater risk of heart and circulatory disease. Prior to the Hypertension in the Very Elderly Trial (HYVET), part-funded by the BHF, there were no clear guidelines on whether high blood pressure in people aged 80 or over should be treated with drugs, as there was concern that the risk of side effects might outweigh any benefits.



Impact

Before 2009, there were no clear guidelines on whether high blood pressure in people aged 80 or over should be treated with medication. Thanks to a clinical trial part-funded by the BHF, the benefits of blood pressure lowering therapy have been shown to significantly outweigh the risk of side effects, leading millions of elderly people around the world to get the life-prolonging treatment they need.

It's estimated that as many as 7 million people in the UK are currently living with untreated hypertension. Your donations can help to prevent needless deaths from cardiovascular disease.

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FOR EVERY
HEARTBEAT**
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1994

The BHF funds £140,000 to run a small pilot trial led by Professor Bulpitt, of 1,300 people from across 10 European countries



2000

The BHF provides £145,000 for further analysis of the HYVET data

2008

Further results from the main HYVET study are published, demonstrating a clear benefit of antihypertensive drugs to elderly patients. Treatment was associated with a 21% reduction in death, a 37% reduction in stroke, a 34% reduction in cardiovascular events, and a 64% reduction in heart failure

2009

Worldwide medical guidelines are updated to recommend that treatment for hypertension should not be withheld from elderly (80+) patients

2011

UK medical (NICE) guidelines are updated to recommend that over-80s should receive treatment for hypertension. The American Heart Association and American College of Cardiology issue a consensus statement endorsing the outcomes of HYVET

1997

The BHF provides £730,000 to Professor Bulpitt towards the main HYVET trial of 3,845 patients aged 80+ with high blood pressure, recruited from across 4 continents and given either blood pressure lowering (antihypertensive) therapy, or a placebo

2003

Results from the HYVET pilot study are published, showing that patients given antihypertensive therapy were less likely to die from stroke, although the researchers noted a possible increase in deaths from other causes to die from stroke, although the researchers noted a possible increase in deaths from other causes

2008

HYVET is unanimously voted Trial of the Year by the prestigious Project ImpACT (Important Achievements in Clinical Trials) and the Society for Clinical Trials. It is judged to have "improved the lot of mankind, providing the basis for substantial, beneficial change in healthcare"

2010

Hypertension treatment in over-80s is shown to have greater economic benefits than no treatment, due to improved health outcomes

2012

An extended study of HYVET is published, showing significant immediate benefits of antihypertensive treatment for the very elderly



Research



Funding



Medical
Milestone



Impact