

# 17/05 - WORLD HYPERTENSION DAY: reflections in times of COVID's Pandemic



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On May 17th, 2020, arterial hypertension (AH) is celebrated worldwide. In this sense, the Brazilian Society of Hypertension calls attention to people to be attentive and check their blood pressure with a certain frequency, to avoid complications that occur when she becomes very high.

Arterial hypertension (AH) is a chronic non-communicable disease defined by blood pressure levels, characterized by a persistent increase in blood pressure (BP), that is, systolic BP (SBP) greater than or equal to 140 mmHg and/or diastolic BP (DBP) greater than or equal to 90 mmHg, measured with the correct technique, on at least two different occasions, in the absence of antihypertensive medication.

Faced with the context of the coronavirus pandemic, scientific evidence from around the world demonstrates the decrease in the demand for hospitals for cardiovascular diseases due to the fear of people becoming infected with the coronavirus.

For this reason, the Brazilian Guidelines on Hypertension, refer to AH with a multifactorial clinical condition, which depends on many factors such as: genetics, age, ethnicity, overweight/obesity, sodium and potassium intake, physical inactivity, alcohol and socioeconomic factors.

According to the 2013 National Health Survey, 21,4% (95% CI 20,8-22,0) of Brazilian adults self-reported AH, while considering the measured BP measurements and use of antihypertensive medication. In 2018, expenditures of US \$ 523.7 million were estimated on SUS, with hospitalizations, outpatient procedures and medications (NILSON et al., 2020). In 2017, there were a total of 1.312.663 deaths, with a percentage of 27,3% for CVD. These diseases accounted for 22,6% of premature deaths in Brazil (between 30 and 69 years of age). In terms of costs to the Unified Health System, HA has higher attributable costs than those of obesity and diabetes mellitus.

Traditionally, high blood pressure (BP) values have been associated with risk for stroke, ischemic heart disease, chronic kidney disease (CKD) and early mortality. In a classic meta-analysis study involving 61 observational studies, with a follow-up of 12.7 million people per year and a record of 56,000 deaths from coronary artery disease (CAD) or stroke, it produced consistent observational evidence. This meta-analysis demonstrated that the risk starts with BP values as low as 115 mmHg of systolic BP or 75 mmHg of diastolic BP. Despite the observational evidence, there was no incorporation of these findings in the definition of the diagnosis of hypertension (AH), which has remained at 140/90 mmHg for many years.

In this context, changes in lifestyle are important and society as a whole must participate in this effort. Continuing health education programs aimed at the population should be encouraged through health promotion actions to avoid complications of AH. ■

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