

# Nurses' Performance In Relation To The Elderly With Arterial Hypertension In Primary Care

**RESUMO** | Objetivo: Identificar se os idosos da cidade de Cruzeiro recebem, entendem e seguem as orientações dadas pelos Enfermeiros da Atenção Básica sobre a prevenção da Hipertensão Arterial. Método: O trabalho consiste em uma pesquisa quali-quantitativa, na qual 50 idosos foram questionados sobre seu conhecimento acerca da hipertensão, orientações dos enfermeiros e características da doença. O questionário era composto por 15 perguntas. A pesquisa foi realizada na cidade de Cruzeiro SP, em Unidades de Atenção Básica, num período de janeiro a março de 2022. Resultado: Mesmo com todas as orientações sobre a hipertensão, 88% dos entrevistados não pratica exercícios físicos, 46% sentem falta de ar e 10% não estão tomando os medicamentos corretamente. Conclusão: Pôde-se identificar que, nas unidades investigadas, os enfermeiros passam as informações corretas aos seus pacientes, em relação aos horários e dosagem dos medicamentos, assim como, informam sobre a necessidade de uma alimentação e hidratação adequadas. Porém, os idosos, muitas vezes por esquecimento, deixam de fazer o que lhes foi recomendado

**Descritores:** Enfermeiro; Idoso; Hipertensão; Atenção Primária à Saúde.

**ABSTRACT** | Objective: To identify whether the elderly in the city of Cruzeiro receive, understand and follow the guidelines given by Primary Care Nurses on the prevention of Arterial Hypertension. Method: The work consists of a quali-quantitative research, in which 50 elderly people were asked about their knowledge about hypertension, nurses' guidelines and characteristics of the disease. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions. The survey was carried out in the city of Cruzeiro SP, in Primary Care Units, from January to March 2022. Result: Even with all the guidelines on hypertension, 88% of respondents do not practice physical exercises, 46% feel a lack of air and 10% are not taking their medication correctly. Conclusion: It was possible to identify that, in the investigated units, the nurses pass the correct information to their patients, in relation to the times and dosage of the medicines, as well as, they inform about the need for adequate food and hydration. However, the elderly, often due to forgetfulness, fail to do what was recommended.

**Keywords:** Nurse; Elderly; Hypertension; Primary Health Care.

**RESUMEN** | Objetivo: Identificar si los ancianos de la ciudad de Cruzeiro reciben, comprenden y siguen las orientaciones dadas por Enfermeras de Atención Primaria sobre la prevención de la Hipertensión Arterial. Método: El trabajo consiste en una investigación cuali-quantitativa, en la que se preguntó a 50 ancianos acerca de su conocimiento sobre hipertensión arterial, directrices de enfermería y características de la enfermedad. El cuestionario constaba de 15 preguntas. La encuesta fue realizada en la ciudad de Cruzeiro SP, en Unidades de Atención Básica, de enero a marzo de 2022. Resultado: Mismo con todas las orientaciones sobre la hipertensión, 88% de los encuestados no practican ejercicios físicos, 46% sienten falta de aire y el 10% no está tomando su medicación correctamente. Conclusión: Fue posible identificar que, en las unidades investigadas, los enfermeros pasan la información correcta a sus pacientes, en relación a los tiempos y dosis de los medicamentos, así como informan sobre la necesidad de alimentación e hidratación adecuadas. Sin embargo, los ancianos, muchas veces por olvidos, dejan de hacer lo recomendado.

**Palabras claves:** Enfermera; Anciano; Hipertensión; Primeros auxilios.

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## INTRODUCTION

In Brazil, a developing country, for a person to be considered elderly, they have to be 60 years old or older, while in other developed countries, this figure becomes 65 years old or older. The aging process is individual, irreversible and sequential, starting when we are still young. Factors such as: reduction in the

birth rate, decrease in mortality and increase in life expectancy, contribute to the growing evolution of this event worldwide <sup>1</sup>. A população brasileira vem vivendo um envelhecimento significativo, mudando o conceito de ser um país jovem.

The Brazilian population has been experiencing significant aging, changing the concept of being a young country. The population has been showing an increase in the number of elderly people in health services, considering that these changes are influenced by people's way of life. With a significant increase, when compared to other groups, and it is estimated that in 2043, a quarter of the Brazilian population will be over 60 years of age, and that of 14 years will be only 16% of the population <sup>2</sup>.

About 33% of the adult population su-

ffers from some type of chronic disease. Those most affected by hypertension are the elderly and this incidence is higher in underdeveloped countries. The practice of regular and continuous physical activity is recognized as an effective way to improve health. A sedentary lifestyle, on the contrary, is related to obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression and increased mortality related to chronic diseases, including cancer <sup>3</sup>.

The Unified Health System (SUS) applies to everyone without any perception of difference. Therefore, users' right of access to the SUS, their personal dignity, autonomy and values also need to be respected, both in the production of individual and collective health. It must be based on the needs of users, through the adequate and timely use of services and actions that guarantee that users make this type of visit, without any discrimination, with enthusiasm and with humanity. Thus, it can be said that health is everyone's right <sup>4</sup>.

When it comes to Primary Care, it is through the Family Health Strategy (ESF) that the population can be guided and directed to all other levels, according to their needs in that period. Thus, Primary Care is one of the gateways to the use of health services in prevention and promotion to improve the quality of life <sup>5</sup>.

Systemic Arterial Hypertension (SAH) is presented as the main reason for cardiovascular diseases. É conhecida como pressão arterial elevada e continua sendo um dos principais motivos de morbidade e mortalidade no país e no mundo <sup>6</sup>.

Arterial Hypertension (AH) is a multifactorial clinical condition that is characterized by high blood pressure levels such as 140 x 90 mmHg, which affects a large group of elderly people. It is not a communicable disease, but of great cardiovascular risk, if proper care is not taken <sup>7</sup>.

The World Health Organization (WHO) calculates that approximately 600 million people are affected by AH and are not prevented, and estimate a global growth of 60% of cases by 2025, thus, without adequate care, there is, on average, <sup>7</sup> 1

million annual deaths <sup>8</sup>.

This study was designed to identify whether elderly people with AH receive, understand and follow the guidelines given by Primary Care Nurses for the prevention and control of this pathology. This study is extremely important because hypertension is increasing a lot among the elderly group, bringing a very great risk to their health.

## METHOD

The work consists of a qualitative and quantitative research that, according to Knechtel (2014), is a type of research that acts on a human or social problem, is based on the test of a theory and consists of variables quantified in numbers, which are statistically evaluated, in order to determine whether the generalizations predicted in the theory are true or not. The survey was carried out in the city of Cruzeiro - SP, in Primary Care Units, from January to March 2022 for data collection. <sup>9</sup>.

The research participants were 50 elderly people of both sexes, who answered a virtual questionnaire. Inclusion factors were being over 60 years old, being hypertensive and being registered in a primary care unit. On the other hand, people who did not fit the inclusion criteria or who refused to answer the questionnaire were excluded.

An authorization letter was requested from the Health Department of the city of Cruzeiro to carry out the research. The identity of the elderly was kept confidential, since they received random numbers during the questionnaire response. In addition, all signed a virtual informed consent form, in which it was written that they could abandon the research if they felt the need or any embarrassment.

A semi-structured questionnaire was applied in Primary Care at ESF Vila Paulo, ESF Lagoa Dourada and UBS Km 4. The questionnaire was designed by the researchers in order to collect the results on hypertensive patients. This questionnaire was made available in a virtual environment, containing 15 questions.

The National Research Ethics Commit-

tee (CONEP) guides researchers and Research Ethics Committees regarding procedures involving contact with participants and/or data collection at any stage of the research, in a virtual environment. Such measures aim to preserve the protection, security and rights of research participants. The document was signed electronically by Jorge Venâncio, Administrator, on 02/24/2021, based on art. 6, § 1, of Decree No. 8,539, of October 8, 2015; and art. 8, of Ordinance No. 900 of March 31, 2017 10.

A virtual questionnaire was applied in the units mentioned above. The project was submitted and approved by the Ethics and Research Committee (CEP) of Centro Universitário Teresa D'Ávila - UNIFATEA, under CAAE 46733021.2.0000.5431 and opinion number 4.785.477, of June 16, 2021.

Data were compiled in tables and graphs and subsequently analyzed comparatively, among themselves and with existing data in the literature.

## RESULTS

During the research, 15 questions were asked to a group of elderly people and the answers were presented below.

The first question refers to the age of the participants. The result showed that 24 seniors who answered the questionnaire are aged between 60 and 70 years old; 22 in the range of 71 to 80 years old; and 4, aged between 81 and 90 years old, 28 women and 22 men.

The third question of the survey "Do you usually measure your blood pressure?" revealed that only 24 elderly people have the habit of measuring it. Regarding the fourth survey question: "Did you receive guidance on hypertension?", 47 patients said they received guidance on hypertension.

The fifth question in the survey was "Were you advised on the number of times and amount of medication to be used each day?" According to the interviewees, 48 seniors said they were guided. When answering the sixth question of the survey "Are you taking the medication correctly?" it was noted that 45 patients are taking the

medication correctly, and only 5 are not taking it because they forget.

The seventh survey question: "How should your sleep be, according to the nurse's guidance?" showed that 44 patients said they should sleep 7 to 8 hours a day.

"Check the symptoms that may be associated with hypertension?" was the eighth question.

Figure 1: Symptoms that may be associated with hypertension.

According to figure 1, 30 seniors chose the option that showed 'all of the above', 10 of them opted for 'pain in the back of the neck', 4 said they were 'dizziness', 4 pointed to 'numbness or tingling in some part of the body', 1 chest pain, without having done physical exertion, 1 increase in the frequency of urination.

The ninth question in the survey reads "Would you say that hypertension has affected your quality of life?"

Figure 2: Percentage of patients whose life is affected by hypertension.

According to figure 2, 22 seniors said that hypertension has not affected their quality of life, 19 said that it affects them a little and 9 said that it does not affect their lives.

The tenth survey question: "Do you know that you have to avoid/eliminate salt from your diet?" Regarding avoiding salt in the diet, the 50 participants stated that they know the importance of avoiding salt.

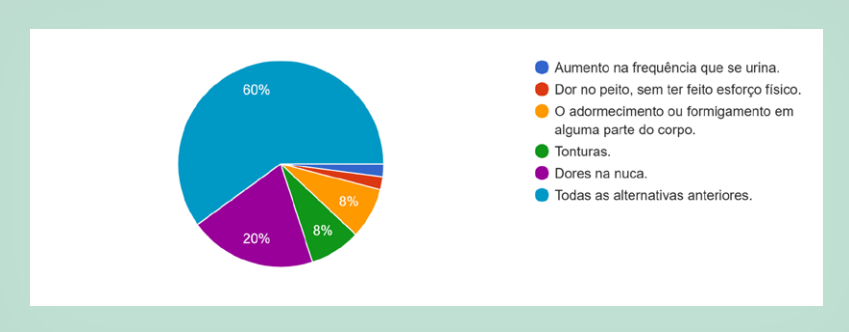
The eleventh survey question: "What guidance did you receive on the proper way to eat?"

Figure 3: Porcentagem de pacientes que receberam orientações adequadas de se alimentar

Of the interviewees, 47 patients avoid excess salt in their diet, while the other 3 eat greens and vegetables.

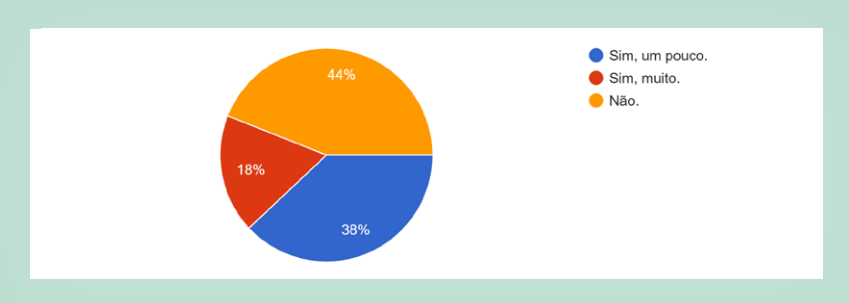
The twelfth survey question: "There was guidance on the importance of drinking water, in which 50 patients said they had been advised on the importance of drinking water. Regarding the thirteenth question of the survey: "How much water should you drink, on average, per day?" 46 patients know they should drink 2 liters of water a day.

**Figure 1: Symptoms that may be associated with hypertension.**



Source: Google Forms, adapted by the author himself.

**Figure 2: Percentage of patients whose life is affected by hypertension.**



Source: Google Forms, adapted by the author himself.

The fourteenth survey question: "Do you feel short of breath when walking?" It showed that 27 patients did not experience shortness of breath while walking.

The fifteenth question of the survey "Do you practice physical exercises?" revealed that 44 patients do not practice any type of physical exercise.

Of the 6 who practice, among the activities mentioned are Stretching, Bicycle, Walking and Bodybuilding.

**DISCUSSION**

In this study, it is evident that the age and gender profile of the elderly had an average of between 60 and 70 years of age, and in Brazil, a person is considered elderly from 60 years of age, therefore, all respondents fall into the category of elderly.

(1) And 56% of the elderly are considered female regarding self-care, women were classified as the most attentive, compared to men, to possible health problems, as

they are always going to routine appointments. (11) assessments and whenever necessary, to prevent greater risks and have correct control. (12) According to the survey, women are the majority who check their blood pressure. Women tend to adhere more easily to self-care and health projects, seeking to control pressure, preventing greater risks, while men do not attach the same importance to these factors. (13)

Regarding the guidelines on hypertension and the correct medications, nurses have an obligation to guide patients, making appropriate interventions for risk factors, with the purpose of reducing the appearance of injuries, (14) and it is also important for patients to know what it is hypertension, since among the elderly, it affects one in every two people, being a silent disease that can bring health complications. (15)

The time at which a medicine is ingested can increase its effectiveness in fighting the disease, since the lack of it

can change behavior, bring side effects and its effectiveness can be delayed.<sup>(16)</sup> The medicine taken correctly plays an important role, being fundamental to reduce the risks of the disease and promote the recovery of the patient's health.<sup>(17)</sup>

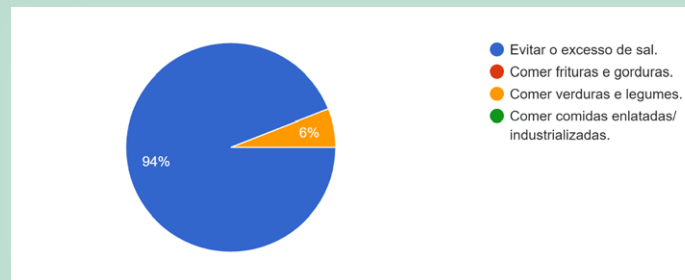
With the description of ideal sleep per day, he had an average of 7 to 8 hours per day. As for the number of hours slept, it is established as adequate that the elderly have 7 to 8 hours of sleep, for health maintenance, such as physical and mental rest, energy recovery and well-being.<sup>(18)</sup>

With the representation of symptoms and quality of life being affected by hypertension, 38% of the elderly have been slightly affected, and some patients who are affected by hypertension over time will present some symptoms such as chest pain, dizziness, pain in the neck, malaise and tingling in some part of the body, these being the reasons for looking for a doctor.<sup>(19)</sup> The different aspects related to the quality of life and health conditions of hypertensive patients are also related to the use of medications of great interest and importance in clinical practice, improving the quality of life of these patients.<sup>(20)</sup> In the representation of eliminating salt and adequate guidance on nutrition, an average of 95% of the elderly avoided excess salt in the diet, and in the prevention and control of hypertension, eating habits have a relevant impact, oil, fat, salt and sugar have a high content of nutrients, but are harmful to health, as the excessive consumption of sodium.<sup>(21)</sup> People who received standard guidance on changing their lifestyle associated with an appropriate way of eating, such as avoiding salt, fried and canned foods, have shown greater control of hypertension.<sup>(22)</sup>

With the description of the importance of drinking water and the ideal amount per day, it had an average of 2 liters per day and all interviewees were guided on the importance, which water is the most present substance in nature, being a fundamental element for guaranteeing our life, better indicate the importance of water for our existence as natural or biological beings.<sup>(23)</sup> Our body is made up of 70% water and is essential for the survival of human beings and not to develop diseases. Based on consumption values, 2 liters of water per day is considered ideal.<sup>(24)</sup>

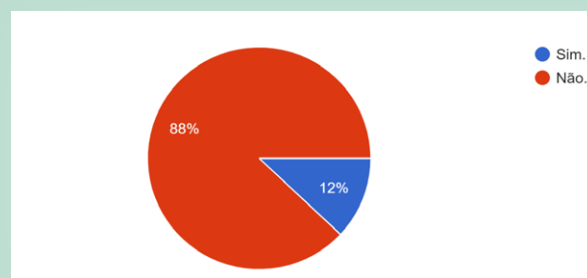
With the profile of the elderly who feel short of breath and practice physical exercises, there was an average of 27 patients who did not feel short of breath and only 6 of the interviewees practice some type of exercise. When high blood pressure is not controlled, the quality of life of the elderly is directly affected. Therefore, when the elderly person takes the medication correctly, it can reduce effects such as shortness of breath, which is a common symptom in many people with heart failure.<sup>(25)</sup> The regular practice of physical activity is associated with the prevention and treatment of diseases, in addition to contributing to improving people's quality of life.<sup>(26)</sup>

**Figure 3: Percentage of patients who received proper feeding guidelines.**



Source: Google Forms, adapted by the author himself.

**Figure 4: percentage of patients who practice physical exercises.**



Source: Google Forms, adapted by the author himself.

## CONCLUSION

This research elucidated some aspects related to the information given by Primary Care nurses to hypertensive elderly people in the city of Cruzeiro.

It was possible to identify that, in the investigated units, the nurses responsible for these elderly people pass on information regarding the pathology to their patients in relation to the times and dosage of medications, as well as informing them about the need for adequate nutrition and hydration, in addition to pointing to the need to practice regular physical activity.

It could also be noted that hypertensive elderly people receive information, but often forgetting to do what is right.

This work came to ratify the importance of the Primary Care Nurse in the care of patients, especially the elderly who need to be reminded of how they should act so that the disease does not interfere with their quality of life. 🐦

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