

Relaxation therapy controls high blood pressure

Taipei, Taiwan. Hypertension (diastolic blood pressure of 90 mm Hg or higher or systolic pressure of 140 mm Hg or higher) is widespread in northern Taiwan.

A recent survey found that 27.2 per cent of males and 13.6 per cent of females suffer from this condition. A team of researchers from the National Taiwan University and the University of Hawaii now reports that relaxation techniques, frequent blood pressure measurements, and educational techniques are all effective in controlling hypertension. Their experiment involved 590 patients. The patients were randomly assigned to practise relaxation techniques at home, to have frequent, routine blood pressure measurements by health professionals, to read information packages about hypertension control or to receive no treatment (control group).

The relaxation techniques involved one-on-one instruction sessions, taped messages of progressive relaxation procedures, and encouragement to perform Buddhist meditation. At the end of the two-month test period the average drop in systolic pressure in the relaxation group was 11 mm Hg and the drop in diastolic pressure was 4.7 mm Hg greater than in the control group.

The patients who participated in the frequent blood pressure measurement program also lowered their pressure significantly as did the self-learning group. Almost 50 per cent of the members of the relaxation and self-learning groups achieved a drop in systolic pressure of 10 mm Hg or more and a drop in diastolic pressure of 5 mm Hg or more as a result of the program.

Yen, Lee-Lan, et al. Comparison of relaxation techniques, routine blood pressure measurements, and self-learning packages in hypertension control.
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