



SOCIEDAD INTERAMERICANA DE CARDIOLOGIA

INTERAMERICAN SOCIETY OF CARDIOLOGY

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Press Gazette

#ConoceTusNúmeros #KnowYourNumbers

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Hypertension is a common disease in the world, causing 800,000 deaths in Latin America and the Caribbean each year. According to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), only 1 in 5 people with hypertension manage to control it with figures below 140/90 mmHg.

Dr. Gustavo Restrepo, President of the Inter-American Society of Cardiology (SIAC), warns about this disease that, despite causing so many deaths, often goes unnoticed by those who suffer it, because it is not always accompanied by symptoms which would allow for suspicion. This leads to more than half of hypertensive patients not knowing that they have this condition.

Although the diagnosis of the disease is not complex and represents a low cost for health systems, the approach to this health problem has multiple angles. According to Dr. Fernando Wyss, former president of the Society of Arterial Hypertension of Central America and the Caribbean, the population is not only unaware of aspects related to the diagnosis of the disease, but also in its prevention, especially with regard to consumption of salt. Our communities consume an excess of sodium, which is not only present in table salt, but also essentially present in processed foods which can mean more than 60% of the daily recommended consumption. According to Dr. Eduardo Barbosa, President of the Latin American Society of Arterial Hypertension (LASH), the population should be educated in reading food labels, as well as encouraging legislation that limits the excessive incorporation of sodium in processed products.

The therapeutic management of arterial hypertension today offers the possibility of using a large number of drugs which are effective and safe, yet many of the treated patients continue to show high blood pressure values. Dr. Alvaro Sosa



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Liprandi from the SIAC, warns that in many cases the treatment is insufficient, but that it is also crucial to be attentive to patients who, seeing that their pressure values are normalized, decide to abandon the drugs wrongly; the lack of adherence is one of the causes why hypertensive patients end up having myocardial infarctions and cerebrovascular incidents. According

to Dr. Carlos Ponte, in charge of the Prevention Committee of SIAC, it is very important to realize that the population must jointly combat this 'plague' that leads to death and disability, reason why we are considering inviting patients to participate of our medical congresses.

Prof David Wood, President of the World Heart Federation (WHF), stated that hypertension is a global health problem, which has a huge impact on the costs for health care systems given the consequences such as stroke, heart attacks and kidney failure. Low-cost treatments can control hypertension, but when patients develop complications because of a failure to treat blood pressure effectively they require high-cost diagnostic services and treatments in hospital. Many of these patients are unable to lead a normal and economically productive life again, both a personal loss and one for society as a whole. Therefore detection and effective treatment of hypertension at an early stage is of paramount importance.

The SIAC, together with WHF and LASH, have launched a campaign to increase knowledge, prevention and control of hypertension throughout the American continent from May 17 to 23. In support of the slogan of OPS #ConoceTusNúmeros, activities will be carried out in more than 50 cities, in hopes of stimulating the participation of the population. According to its Director, Dr. Ricardo Lopez Santi, these campaigns must be maintained over time to show results that translate into communities with a healthy lifestyle. He believes that it will only be successful when people incorporate healthy foods, physical activity, and a lifestyle without tobacco and with moderation in the consumption of



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alcohol in their day to
day. That is why SIAC has set long-term goals under the motto "**For the American Heart**".

