

Screening Cardiovascular Risk Factors in the General Population Remains a Useful Tool

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Objective: The present study summarizes epidemiological data collected throughout a free screening for cardiovascular (CV) risk factors offered to the population of Liège in September 2005 as part of the Heart Week. **Method:** The screening lasted for 2 days in a crowded commercial square in the city centre. Measurements offered: blood pressure (BP) (electronic device and mercury sphygmomanometer when in doubt about BP level), glycemia, total cholesterol (TC), waist circumference. Participants were interviewed to assess awareness of their CV risks and were asked to name CV risk factors. **Results:** Six hundred and seventy nine persons participated (men: 49.6%; women: 50.4%). Mean age was 55 years (range: 17–91).

According to the 2003 ESH-ESC Guidelines, 20% had an optimal BP, 20% were classified as normal, and 15% had high normal values. Within the 45% classified as hypertensives, 15% had mild hypertension, 8% had moderate hypertension, and 3% presented with severe hypertension. Finally, 19% had an isolated systolic increase in BP. The proportion of males in hypertensives was slightly higher while not differing in age. The highest proportion of current smokers was observed in youngest participants (29%). Waist circumference >80 cm was present 64% of women and 58% of men had a value >94 cm. Among participants, 46% were unaware of their high BP and 56% were unaware of their high TC level. The CV risks quoted most frequently by participants were unhealthy diet and lipids (38%), obesity (33%), hypertension (20%). Diabetes and smoking were mentioned by <10% of people. Twenty five percent had a BP device for self-measurement and 23% admitted they had never visited their physician. **Conclusions:** This epidemiological survey showed that too many persons still remain unaware of their CV risk status. This approach turned out to be useful and highlights the fact that education of the population is still necessary.