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Blood Pressure: A Moving Target

In a press release this past weekend, the National Institute of Health released preliminary results of the SPRINT Study (Systolic Blood Pressure Intervention Trial) sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. It reported that lowering the target systolic blood pressure (SBP) from 140 mm Hg to 120 mm Hg in people over 50 years old significantly reduced the death rate and cardiovascular events such as heart attacks and strokes.

The subjects were recruited from 102 clinical centers throughout the U.S. (1). The conditions for inclusion in the trial were that men and women must be 50 or older with an average SBP above 130 and one of the following: evidence of cardiovascular disease, chronic kidney disease, 10-year Framingham cardiovascular disease risk score greater than 15%, or older than 75.

The subjects were then divided into two treatment groups. Treatment for the first group had a goal of reducing SBP to less than 140 mm Hg; the other group was treated with a goal of reducing SBP to less than 120 mm Hg. The results were so compelling that the study was terminated early. They will still monitor the subjects, but they felt compelled to release the results immediately.

Because I had already planned to do the *High Blood Pressure: Getting It Down* webinar, this was the best information I could include in how to deal with high blood pressure. At least, that's what one would think. This week we'll take a closer look at how the researchers approached lowering SBP and what it may mean for us.



What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

Reference: Clin Trials. 2014 Oct;11(5):532-46.

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