

JNC VII: The more things change...



Imagine you are Rip Van Winkle, MD, waking from a 20-year sleep to hear that the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure has released its 7th report.¹ You wouldn't be surprised to learn that diuretics are first-line therapy for hypertension, a systolic blood pressure of >140 mm Hg is a more important risk factor than elevated diastolic blood pressure, and that patients will achieve goal blood pressure only if they are motivated.

Moreover, you probably wouldn't be surprised to learn that hypertension has now been characterized as a "lifestyle syndrome" associated with our insatiable appetites for too many calories, too much alcohol, too much salt, too much fat, too much tobacco—simply too much!

Speaking of excess, JNC VII informs us that people who are normotensive at age 55 have a 90% lifetime risk for developing hypertension, and that those with a blood pressure of 120–139 mm Hg systolic or 80–89 mm Hg diastolic blood pressure are now "prehypertensive" and should adopt lifestyle modifications. Such figures are downright depressing. I have a hard enough time getting patients to lose weight, reduce dietary sodium, and engage in physical activity when they have a disease, let alone a "predisease."

Commenting on JNC VII in *JAMA*, Dr Thomas Kottke and colleagues state that "technologies are available to detect, treat, and control hypertension ... delivery systems are also available. What is unclear is the degree of the will to succeed..." I hope they are correct: that hypertension control is simply a "problem of technology transfer." I remain suspicious, however, about such blithe pronouncements. Sure, interventions in North Karelia, Finland, and Olmstead County, Minnesota, where a managed care environment prevails, can be successful. I just wish I felt more optimistic about replicating these outcomes in the typical family practice while seeing 6 patients hourly.

Perhaps as Dr Kottke suggests, it's simply a matter of "the will to succeed, which requires devoting the resources, organizing the treatment systems, and creating the environments that allow patients and clinicians to cross the hypertension quality chasm."

And your next thought as Dr Van Winkle, just before you curl up for another 20 years, might be "I've heard this all before."

Jeff Susman, MD, Editor-in-Chief

REFERENCES

1. Chobanian AV, Bakris GL, Black HR. The seventh report of the joint national committee on prevention, detection, evaluation, and treatment of high blood pressure. *JAMA* 2003; 289:2560–2573.
2. Kottke TE, Stroebel RJ, Hoffman RS. JNC 7—It's more than high blood pressure. *JAMA* 2003; 289:2573–2575.

EDITOR

Jeffrey L. Susman, MD,
University of Cincinnati

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Clinical Inquiries

James Stevermer, MD, MSPH,
University of Missouri, Columbia

Applied Evidence

Cheryl A. Flynn, MD, MS, State University
of New York, Syracuse

Original Research

John Hickner, MD, MS, Michigan State
University, East Lansing

POEMs

Allen Shaughnessy, PharmD, Harrisburg
Family Practice Residency, Harrisburg, Pa

Photo Rounds

Richard P. Usatine, MD, Florida State
University, Tallahassee

CONSULTING EDITOR

Clinical Inquiries

Bernard Ewigman, MD, MSPH,
University of Chicago

ASSISTANT EDITORS

POEMs

Henry Barry, MD, MS, Michigan State
University, East Lansing

Linda French, MD, Michigan State
University, East Lansing

David Slawson, MD, MS, University of
Virginia, Charlottesville

Technology Reviews

Gary N. Fox, MD, St. Vincent Mercy
Medical Center, Toledo, Ohio

Clinical Inquiries

Kevin Y. Kane, MD, MSPH, University
of Missouri, Columbia

Gary Kelsberg, MD, FAAFP, University
of Washington, Renton

M. Norman Oliver, MD, MA, University
of Virginia, Charlottesville

Peter C. Smith, MD, University of Colorado
Health Sciences Center, Denver

Fraser G. Tudiver, MD, East Tennessee
State University, Johnson City

Jan P. Vleck, MD, University of Washington,
Olympia

David Weismantel, MD, MS, Michigan
State University, East Lansing

EDITORIAL BOARD

Frederick Chen, MD, MPH, Agency for
Healthcare Research and Quality, Washington, DC

Larry Culppepper, MD, MPH, Boston
University Medical Center, Boston, Mass

John W. Ely, MD, MSPH, University of
Iowa College of Medicine, Iowa City

Linda French, MD, Michigan State
University, East Lansing

Ted Ganiats, MD, University of
California—San Diego Health Outcomes
Assessment Program, La Jolla, Calif

Caryl J. Heaton, DO, University of Medicine
and Dentistry of New Jersey, New Brunswick

Fred Miser, MD, MA, Ohio State University,
Columbus

Kevin Peterson, MD, MPH, University of
Minnesota, Minneapolis

Kendra Schwartz, MD, MSPH, Wayne
State University, Detroit, Mich

Jack Westfall, MD, University of Colorado,
Denver

Direct editorial information and inquiries to:

EDITORIAL OFFICE

Health Professions Building, Department of
Family Medicine, PO Box 670582,
Cincinnati, OH 45267-0582. Telephone:
(513) 558-4021.

PUBLISHING OFFICES

Dowden Health Media, Inc.,
110 Summit Avenue, Montvale, NJ 07645.
Telephone: (201) 782-5735.
Fax: (201) 505-5890