

# PERSPECTIVES IN HYPERTENSION

## A randomised trial of a hypertension certification program for pharmacists: The RxPATH Study



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As you know, uptake and implementation of practice guidelines is challenging. We created a novel educational program, the Hypertension Canada Professional Certification Program (HC-PCP) for primary care providers. The HC-PCP is based upon the Hypertension Canada guidelines and constructed around core competencies developed by hypertension experts and primary care providers (1). The HC-PCP is a 4 module self-directed online program which covers correct BP measurement technique (assessed via video) and submission of 3 patient cases reviewed by hypertension experts (see <https://hypertension.ca/professional-certification-program>).

We took the opportunity to evaluate the impact of the HC-PCP taken by primary care providers on patient outcomes in the RxPATH study (2). Pharmacists were the group selected because of their interest in the program. We used a stepped wedge cluster randomised design, with the pharmacy as the unit of randomization. Pharmacists enrolled their patients with poorly controlled hypertension.

- During the Control period, pharmacists were given a copy of the Hypertension Canada Guidelines and provided usual care to their patients.
- During the Intervention period, pharmacists completed the HC-PCP, then provided an

enhanced level of care as outlined in the program to their patients.

Uniquely, we evaluated the HC-PCP at the level of the pharmacists' patients. We enrolled 890 patients from 59 pharmacies (104 pharmacists). We found that the intervention (pharmacists completing the HC-PCP and delivering care accordingly to their patients) was associated with a 4.76mmHg greater systolic BP reduction at 3 months, compared to control (95% confidence interval 2.02 to 7.50,  $p < 0.0001$ ) (Figure). Patient satisfaction with pharmacist care was high at 75.9 (/90) using the Consultation Satisfaction Questionnaire.

We think the implications and unique aspects of the RxPATH study are:

- The HC-PCP is a novel approach to the implementation of the Hypertension Canada Guidelines
- A patient-level evaluation of a professional education program aimed at primary care providers
- Demonstrates a clinically important reduction in BP
- Adds further evidence to the almost 100 randomised trials of pharmacist care in hypertension
- The HC-PCP is easily scalable within primary care

## References

1. Watson KE, Tsuyuki RT, Beahm NP, Sedore R, Bell A. Assessment of the educational competencies for the Hypertension Canada Professional Certification Program (HC-PCP) designed for implementation of hypertension guidelines into primary care. *Can Pharm J (Ott)* 2021; 154: 271-277.

2. Watson KE, Chan JCH, Pan B, Al Hamarneh YN, Tsuyuki RT. Enhancing hypertension detection and control through a hypertension certification program for pharmacists: A cluster randomized trial (The RxPATH Study). *Can Pharm J (Ott)*; 157: online ahead of print. DOI:10.1177/17151635241254089

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