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## Hypertension in developing countries

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### Summary

Data from different national and regional surveys show that hypertension is common in developing countries, particularly in urban areas, and that rates of awareness, treatment, and control are low. Several hypertension risk factors seem to be more common in developing countries than in developed regions. Findings from serial surveys show an increasing prevalence of hypertension in developing countries, possibly caused by urbanisation, ageing of population, changes to dietary habits, and social stress. High illiteracy rates, poor access to health facilities, bad dietary habits, poverty, and high costs of drugs contribute to poor blood pressure control. The health system in many developing countries is inadequate because of low funds, poor infrastructure, and inexperience. Priority is given to acute disorders, child and maternal health care, and control of communicable diseases. Governments, together with medical societies and non-governmental organisations, should support and promote preventive programmes aiming to increase public awareness, educate physicians, and reduce salt intake. Regulations for the food industry and the production and availability of generic drugs should be reinforced.

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