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ABSTRACT BOOK



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ROUTINE BLOOD PRESSURE MEASUREMENT IN CHILDREN IN PRIMARY CARE SETTING: ARE WE DOING IT RIGHT? SURVEY FOR ADOLESCENTS

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Introduction: A higher prevalence of sedentary behaviour and overweight contribute to increased blood pressure (BP) among children and adolescents. The European Society of Hypertension (ESH) emphasizes the importance of routine BP measurement in children and adolescents to identify youngsters at risk for cardiovascular disease.

Objectives: Study aimed to evaluate the real-life BP measurement experiences and compliance with ESH guidelines in Lithuanian adolescents in primary healthcare centers (PHC).

Methods: A cross-sectional survey study was conducted in Lithuania from October 2023 to March 2024. Answers were collected remotely using Google Forms or in-person distributing hard copies for 14-17 year old pupils at various schools and non-formal education centers. The questionnaire consisted of 15 quantitative questions about overall health of the respondents and their experience with routine BP measurement techniques. Data analysis was performed using MS Excel.

Results: There were 448 respondents with mean age of 15.45 ± 1.14 years, (59.8% females) from 26 different districts. Chronic diseases like diabetes, kidney or heart disease were found in 7.6%. 14.5% were born premature or stayed in the neonatal intensive care unit. The diagnosis of AH was reported by 5.1%. 16.6% of the adolescents stated that their BP was not measured in the PHC at all. Majority of those, who had their BP measured, claimed that BP measurement was done annually once in PHC (79.7%), whereas 11.2% stated that BP was checked less than once a year. Concerning the technique, BP was measured at rest in 59.6% of cases, 41.4% reported an inappropriately sized arm cuff and 38.2% mentioned incorrect body positioning. Most of the responders (78.3%) stated that BP was measured only once during the visit. Physicians do not provide adolescents with insights on their BP results in 40.4% of the cases.

Conclusions: Study showed that PHC physicians in Lithuania tend to be inconsistent with proper BP measurement for adolescents and often do not follow the recommended ESH guidelines in daily clinical practice. These results represent the demand of raising health professional awareness in assessing BP measurement.

Keywords: Blood pressure, measurement, adolescents.