Understanding Measurement of postural hypotension: a nationwide survey of primary care practice in England

Background
Postural hypotension (PH), the drop in blood pressure (BP) on standing, is associated with falls, all-cause mortality and cognitive decline. PH diagnostic criteria require lying-to-standing BP measurements. PH Prevalence in older adults is 20%, however, it is infrequently recorded in primary care records, suggesting PH testing and/or recording is under-utilised in this setting.

Aim
To understand current PH measurement and management by primary care practitioners in England.

Method
Clinical Research Networks circulated an online survey to primary care clinicians involved in measurement of BP. Demographics and responses were summarised as percentages, or median and inter-quartile ranges (IQR), as appropriate. The survey remains open until 30 November 2022; full results will be presented at the conference.

Results
To date, there are 669 replies (341 doctors, 179 nurses, 70 healthcare assistants, 23 pharmacists, 56 other roles); median age 45 (IQR 38 to 53), 72% female. Overall, 597 (89%) responders check for PH, predominantly when symptoms are present (98%). Less common reasons to check include patients being over 80 (24%), Parkinson’s disease (21%), hypertension reviews (18%), medication reviews (12%) or diabetes reviews (11%). Sitting-to-standing BP measurements are common (77%); only 22% use lying-to-standing. Only 64% ensure a rest period before sitting or lying BP measurement and only 1 (IQR 1 to 2) standing BP measurement is made, usually (66%) within the first minute of standing.

Conclusion
Interim findings suggest that most PH assessments in primary care do not meet current guideline criteria. Full findings from this survey are expected to inform and influence future national guidelines.

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