**Hypertension among African American Older adults**

**Introduction**

Hypertension is one of the chronic diseases which lead to various health complications, such as stroke, heart attack, kidney failure, and even death. Hypertension is a global health condition and most common in the older adult population. Also, "Most recent guidelines recommend a treatment target to at least < 150 mmHg systolic in those > age 80" (Still & Ferdinand, 2018). Many studies show that hypertension is most common in African American older adults compared to other ethnic groups. For example, "African Americans have a higher prevalence of hypertension, about 40.4% than whites, which is 27.4%, and Hispanic persons are 26.1% (Still & Ferdinand, 2018). The higher prevalence of hypertension among African Americans, older adults are caused by three key factors: stress, lack of physical activity, and dietary intake.

This paper examines the three major causes of hypertension among African American older adults.

**Stress**

Stress is one of the essential factors leading to hypertension among African American older adults. For African American, the lifetime racial/ethnic discrimination contribute to hypertension in old age (Moss et al., 2018). Compared to other ethnic groups, the African-Americans undergoes considerably higher stress. The statistics show that about 48.9% of major lifetime discrimination happens to African Americans, which is the highest rate compared to other races (Beatty Moody & Waldstein, 2017). This stress is race-related. Of any other ethnic group in the USA, the Africa-America is the group that is worse affected by stress that stems from the element of racial discriminations. This occurs at the works places, the social places and even in cases where this group of people is trying to access government services. Limited access to the main facilities as a result of racial discrimination significantly contributes to race-related stress. It also creates barriers towards achieving healthy and productive gaining among African American. The higher stress levels from racial discriminations do result in higher cases of hypertension recorded among them.

Socioeconomic status SES in African American older adults is another critical factor of stress, which leads to hypertension. The levels of income and social class of most of the Africans American is considered the least among the other ethnic groups. Therefore, most of the African Americans live under abject poverty which cases a significant among of stress among them. Compared to the other ethnic groups, adult African Americans is the leading groups with lower social and economic status in the USA and beyond. According to Kershaw et al., (2020) the lower SES may lead to advanced prevalence rates for numerous common chronic conditions thru multifaceted ways involving social and psychosomatic, common, biological, and hereditary aspects. Also, the lower social and economic status of these groups of people is the leading cause of the stress, which leads to hypertension, especially among the adult population of the ethnic group. For most African American alder adults, the Hypertension prevalence is considerably higher compared to the rate in the other groups as a result of this aspect of lower SES.

The lower SES is often associated with considerably higher levels of stress. Challenges faced by this group of people such as poor housing, poor diet and a higher rate of crime in most of the neighbourhood exposes them to a considerably higher level of stress. The higher stress is the leading cause of the higher prevalence of hypertension that is often the case with them. Research has indicated that in the poor neighbourhood dominated by the African American, the number of people that are often diagnosed with hypertension is often higher compared to those living in decent neighbourhoods. This is often associated with the level of stress in the lower social class (Moss et al., 2018). Therefore, the higher prevalence of hypertension among African American can be attributed to a combination of the higher stress levels and the lower SES. A lower SES subject this group of people to higher levels of stress which therefore results in the higher prevalence of hypertension among the older adult population.

**Lack of physical activity**

The other leading cause of the high prevalence of hypertension in African American older adults is lack of physical activity. Generally, most of the African American adults do not exercises and at a higher prevalence of Hypertension which is associated with an inactive lifestyle. Most of the African Americas do not get involved in the physical activities compared to the other ethnic groups (Shimbo et al., 2017). As such, they live an inert and a less active life which is the leading case of hypertension and other related conditions. "The associations of MVPA and the Sport/Exercise Index with incident hypertension after adjustment for BMI; suggest that BMI does not mediate these associations" (Diaz, et al., 2017). Studies have also indicated the Africans American older adults are very inactive. Most spent the better part of the day seated and without any form of exercise. This is the leading cause of obesity and being overweight, which is the leading cause of Hypertension among this population.

Studies indicate the physical activities have significant impacts on the body. Physical activities have the potential of lowering the risk of hypertension and other lifestyle conditions. According to Wright et al., (2015) A 30 minutes aerobic training each day can lower the risk of hypertension and other health complications among the older adult population by over 20%. Also "Aerobic exercise training reduces BP, with meta-analyses reporting reductions in SBP and DBP of 3.5 and 2.5 mmHg, respectively, pooling all race/ethnicities" (Diaz, et al., 2017). However, for most African Americans older adults, the habit of aerobic training is absent among them. The better population of the African Americans older adult population do not take parts in any form of aerobic exercise training at all. This means most of them to have a considerably higher prevalence of the hypertensions due to the higher levels of both SBP and DBP. The cases of hypertension continue to increase among the African American older adult as the group continue to embrace a more inactive lifestyle due to the Covid-19 time.

The level of activity among African Americans adults is relatively lower compared to the other ethnic groups. Compared to the Hispanic race, African Americans are 15% less likely to participate in any physical activities as their Hispanic counterparts. This exposes most of this population to a higher risk of hypertension (Kershaw et al., 2020). The higher prevalence of the hypertensions among the African American adult in the USA, for example, is associated with their poor lifestyle, which makes them most vulnerable to the higher rate of inactivity. Due to the lower social class that most of this group of people live, most develop other condition associated with a poor lifestyle that makes most of them inactive. The increased levels of inactivity and the lacks activity that is caused as a result of such life are often the leading cause of the higher prevalence of hypertension among them.

**Dietary intake**

The last key factor of developing a high prevalence of hypertension in African American older adults is not controlling dietary intake. Most of the feeding aspect of the Africa American older adult population is often in line with their socioeconomic class SES. Due to the poor economic status of this ethnic group (Wright et al., 2018). Feeding is often unhealthy and uncontrolled. Research shows that African American adults have lower calcium intake because of less milk and dairy products, which leads to the risk of hypertension and other health conditions (Richards et al., 2019). A better percentage of these groups do feed on food with higher animal's fats which result in a higher prevalence of hypertension and other related conditions. The content of the diet for most of the Africans Americans population have a considerably lower amount of fibre contents. The feeding habit of this population if not monitored (Shimbo et al., 2017). Compared to the other ethnic groups, African Americans have the least number of dietary expert monitoring their feeding habits due to the lower social class. This is a significant cause of the higher prevalence of hypertension among this population.

Salt sensitivity is estimated to be present in 73% of hypertensive and 36% of normotensive black individuals (Pilic & Pedlar, 2016). Salts help in the balance of fluid levels in our bodies, transmission of impulses and enabling the construction and relaxation of the body muscles, including the heart. However, too much intake of salt can raise blood pressure, and hypertension is a major risk factor for heart condition and stroke. The better part of the Africans Americans diet is not balanced as a result of their lower economic class (Kershaw et al., 2020). For most of these individuals, studies reveal that their intake of salts and other health risk posing food is higher. The instance of social among African American adults is higher. African America does stand a higher risk of hypertension as a result of the excess intake of raw salts in their diets. The intake of these salts possesses some of the greatest risk challenges among them hypertension.

Causal factors for hypertension cause excessive sodium intakes. On the other hand, diet consist of more fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products and low in sodium and saturated salts is the first most important defence against hypertension. For most African American older adults, the higher prevalence of hypertension is often caused by a higher intake of saturated fats and salts. This is because most of this group of people have a diet which is made up of higher fast saturation a risk factor for hypertension. Besides, this African American intake of the sodium salts is higher, and their intake of vegetable and fruits is relatively lower. Compared to other ethnic groups, the alcoholic intake level in the African American population is relatively higher. This is another cause of the higher prevalence of hypertension that is often witnessed among them (Shimbo et al., 2017).

**Conclusion**

For African Americans, the stress, lack of physical activity, and dietary intake are three key factors that lead to a higher prevalence of hypertension in older adults. According to Bosu et al., "The prevalence of hypertension ranged from 25.6 to 82.6% in the men and from 22.5 to 91.5% in the women" (Bosu et al., 2019). Many research and reports were conducted to show the correlation between hypertension with three key factors among African American older adults. Moreover, African American older adults' lifestyles play an essential role in health care conditions. Also, lifetime racial discrimination African American older adults faced has affected their health condition hypertension. As a general recommendation for this group of people, it is important to watch a diet, embrace physical activities and reduce the levels of stress o reduce the prevalence of hypertension.

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