

Research Article

Reporting of adherence to healthy lifestyle behaviors among hypertensive adults in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 2013



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Abstract

Achieving and maintaining a healthy lifestyle is an important part of hypertension management. The purpose of this study was to assess US state-level prevalence of adherence to healthy lifestyle behaviors among those with self-reported hypertension. Using 2013 data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, a state-based telephone survey, we examined the adherence to five healthy lifestyle behaviors related to hypertension management: having a “normal” weight, not smoking, avoiding or limiting alcohol intake, consuming the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables, and engaging in the recommended amount of physical activity. We estimated age-standardized percentages of each healthy lifestyle behavior overall and by state, as well as prevalence of all five healthy lifestyle behaviors. Overall, the prevalence of healthy lifestyle behaviors varied widely among those with self-reported hypertension: 20.5% had a normal weight, 82.3% did not smoke, 94.1% reported no or limited alcohol intake, 14.1% consumed the recommended amounts of fruits or vegetables, and 46.6% engaged in the recommended amount of physical activity. Overall, only 1.7% of adults with self-reported hypertension reported all five healthy lifestyle behaviors, with significant variation by state. Age-standardized prevalence of individuals reporting all five healthy lifestyle behaviors ranged from 0.3% in Louisiana to 3.8% in the District of Columbia. In conclusion, adherence to healthy lifestyle behaviors varied among those with hypertension; fewer than 2% reported meeting current recommendations and standards when assessed collectively. Disparities were observed by demographic and descriptive characteristics, including geography. *J Am Soc Hypertens* 2016;10(3):252–262. Published by Elsevier Inc. on behalf of American Society of Hypertension.

Keywords: Hypertension; lifestyle intervention; states; surveillance.

Introduction

Hypertension affects almost 30% adults in the United States¹ and is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke, the first and fifth leading causes of death in the

country, respectively.² Although there have been improvements in the awareness and treatment of hypertension over the past decades, the control rate of 51.2% in NHANES 2011–2012 was still below the 61.2% goal in Healthy People 2020.^{3,4} The management of high blood pressure requires multiple synergistic interventions, including individual lifestyle behavior changes, regular and timely access to health care providers, and appropriate antihypertensive medication therapy if needed.⁵

Leading a healthy lifestyle, or engaging in heart-healthy behavioral changes, has a documented effect on lowering or controlling blood pressure and is recommended in current national guidelines.^{6,7} Lifestyle management of hypertension is an initial intervention for any patient newly diagnosed with hypertension.⁸ It is also recommended among

Supplemental Material can be found at www.ashjournal.com.

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Table 1
BRFSS questions and definitions of healthy lifestyle behaviors

Healthy Lifestyles	BRFSS Question	Measures
Maintain a normal weight	About how much do you weigh without shoes? About how tall are you without shoes?	BMI (kg/m ²) = 18.5–24.9
Not smoking	Have you smoked at least 100 cigarettes in your entire life? Do you now smoke cigarettes every day, some days, or not at all? During the past 12 months, have you stopped smoking for 1 day or longer because you were trying to quit smoking? How long has it been since you last smoked cigarettes regularly?	Had not smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime; or reported smoking 100 cigarettes in their lifetime but not currently smoking.
No or limited alcohol intake	During the past 30 days, how many days per week or per month did you have at least 1 drink of any alcoholic beverage such as beer, wine, a malt beverage, or liquor?	No or limited alcohol intake was defined for men as drinking less than two drinks/d or for women drinking less than 1 drink/d.
Consumed recommended amount of fruits	During the past month, how many times per day, week, or month did you drink 100% pure fruit juices? Do not include fruit-flavored drinks with added sugar or fruit juice you made at home and added sugar to. Only include 100% juice. During the past month, not counting juice, how many times per day, week, or month did you eat fruit? Count fresh, frozen, or canned fruit.	Usual amount of fruits consumed were calculated from prediction models and compared to US Department of Agriculture Food Patterns age- and sex-specific recommended amounts.
Consumed recommended amount of vegetables	During the past month, how many times per day, week, or month did you eat cooked or canned beans, such as refried, baked, black beans, garbanzo beans, beans in soup, soybeans, edamame, tofu, or lentils? Do include long green beans. During the past month, how many times per day, week, or month did you eat dark green vegetables, for example, broccoli or dark leafy greens including romaine, chard, collard greens, or spinach? During the past month, how many times per day, week, or month did you eat orange-colored vegetables such as sweet potatoes, pumpkin, winter squash, or carrots? Not counting what you just told me, during the past month, about how many times per day, week, or month did you eat other vegetables? Examples of other vegetables include tomatoes, tomato or V-8 juice, corn, eggplant, peas, lettuce, cabbage, and white potatoes that are not fried, such as baked or mashed potatoes.	Usual amount of vegetables consumed were calculated from prediction models and compared to US Department of Agriculture Food Patterns age- and sex-specific recommended amounts.
Physical activity	During the past month, other than your regular job, did you participate in any physical activities or exercises such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, or walking for exercise? What type of physical activity or exercise did you spend the most time doing during the past month? How many times per week or per month did you take part in this activity during the past month? And when you took part in this activity, for how	Did enough moderate or vigorous physical activity to meet the recommendation of ≥ 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity, ≥ 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity, or an equivalent combination of aerobic physical activity.

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