

Letter to the Editor Regarding “Hypertension Awareness, Treatment, and Control in Mexico: An Opportunistic Medical Student-led Blood Pressure Screening Campaign – A Cross-Sectional Study”

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I have read, with great interest and curiosity the article entitled “Hypertension Awareness, Treatment, and Control in Mexico: An Opportunistic Medical Student-led Blood Pressure Screening Campaign – A Cross-Sectional Study” by Yamamoto-Moreno, JA *et al.*¹ As the current leader of a special interest student group focused on neurology (GECEN) it was a pleasure for me to find an article that promoted a campaign to raise awareness of high blood pressure and its relationship with other diseases. One consequence, stroke, is particularly significant to me, and it was an even better surprise to find that the study was performed by several medical colleagues in different hospitals in my country (Mexico). Therefore, to me, it seems remarkable that high blood pressure, which is also known as “the silent killer” is highly prevalent in Mexico where it is established that more than 30% of Mexican adults are affected yet 40% of them do not even know that they have hypertension.² So, this is where the recognized association of arterial hypertension as the most important individual risk factor for stroke development comes in and, where I find the campaign and subsequent study carried out by these colleagues, highly noteworthy.³

Among the activities that I have carried out over six years as a member of this group, we have focused on stroke prevention in different settings. For example, efforts have been specifically targeted to patients of the university-hospital “Dr. José Eleuterio González” from the *Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (UANL)*, where I am performing my internship, and which has been my second home for the last three years. At the end of the day, the efforts and awareness campaigns have not only been captured as a good memory, but they can be found in different journals, where the efforts made by my predecessors can be

found, as well as the lessons learned; being available to more physicians who are interested in stroke prevention. With the invaluable help of the neurology service professors, we have carried out studies such as the comparison of knowledge achievement after an educational campaign on stroke risk factors, and symptomatology between rural and urban communities, demonstrating that stroke educational campaigns are a cost-effective method for raising stroke awareness and that rural communities can have a greater harnessing of knowledge than urban communities. In addition, the implementations of educational campaigns carried out by medical students are, at the same time, cost-effective and fulfill their purpose of informing the general population.⁵ Awareness campaigns are an important resource to educate large portions of the population. It is important to highlight that medical students also need to be educated in stroke awareness.

Last semester in October, the GECEN held an online event to commemorate world stroke awareness day at the UANL medical school, which included talks by professors of the neurology service and guest professors. To explain, among other topics, symptomatology and risk factors; Interestingly, prior to the event, out of a total of 278 students, 19.1% (53 students) had never heard and/or read about stroke. I consider the role of special interest neurology groups to be of undeniable importance for the education of future doctors, as they help current physicians keep their knowledge up to date and maintain higher quality of clinical investigation. Despite the added difficulties of maintaining interest groups during a pandemic, the educational campaigns of my colleagues and predecessors have proved fruitful.

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