Using the WHO Health Systems Framework to Assess Health Systems Factors Influencing Hypertension Control in Ghana

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Introduction

• Hypertension has been clearly documented to be a serious public health issue in both rural and urban communities in Ghana.1,7
• More importantly, it has been identified that the hypertension detection, treatment and control remain low despite several proposed interventions.1,7
• As a result, innovative strategies developed from a health systems approach might be needed to manage hypertension in the general population in Ghana.
• Although it has been recognized that effective health systems is vital to improving health outcomes, the focus on health systems strengthening and its impact on hypertension control in Ghana is not clear.1

Aim

To critically examine current literature in order to identify the health systems factors influencing hypertension awareness, treatment and control in Ghana.

Method

Search strategy

The analysis was conducted primarily in the context of hypertension control. The WHO framework for health systems strengthening (HSS) was used to map the framework for achieving optimal hypertension in Ghana (Figure 2).
• Databases searched: PubMed, EbosoHost
• Combined keywords search: high blood pressure, hypertension, Ghana, health systems, awareness, treatment, control, treatment guidelines, medication adherence, health facilities, finances, workers, policies, governance

Inclusion Criteria

• Journal articles published between 1990 to 2015
• Full-text studies that reported on the health systems factors influencing hypertension control
• Studies reporting on gaps in Ghana's health system and making recommendations for improving service delivery with regards to hypertension control

Figure 1. Selection process for included articles using PECOSMA guidelines

Leadership and governance

• Strong political commitment backing hypertension control efforts
• Governance ensuring the establishment of appropriate policies combined with effective conditions
• Incentives for the administration of hypertension management and accountability

Health financing

• Timely availability of financial resources to implement the strategic plan from health and health systems to ensure that all population at risk for hypertension are covered without increasing personal cost

Health workforce

• Sufficient and well trained workforce that is fairly distributed around the country
• Responsive, fair and efficient staff delivering interventions with highest possible quality to manage hypertension in the population given available resources and circumstances

Health information systems

• Timely production, analysis, dissemination and use of reliable information on health determinants, health systems performance and health status
• Proper information technology and mapping, logistics monitoring and evaluation of hypertension in the general population

Medical products, infrastructure and technology

• Adequate procurement and supply management to ensure unmet needs of cost effective medications, commodities and services for hypertension detection, diagnosis, and management, which are accessible to all populations at risk

Service delivery

• Delivery of comprehensive package of cost effective and quality hypertension management interventions, where and when needed through health facilities and community based structures with minimum waste of resources

Results

Table 1. Health systems factors associated with hypertension control in Ghana

Figure 2. WHO framework for health systems strengthening for achieving optimal hypertension control in Ghana

Conclusions

• As the burden of hypertension increases in Ghana, innovative strategies to treat and control the disease need to be developed
• More information must be gathered in the broad domains of the health system framework to inform policies, programs and other health system interventions to achieve optimal control of hypertension in Ghana

References

Ibid. A. (2011). Hypertension control in Ghana is not clear
Ogunde, I. G., Boima, O., & Ogedegbe, S. (2012). Delivery of comprehensive package of cost effective and quality hypertension management interventions, where and when needed through health facilities and community based structures with minimum waste of resources

Figure 3. Health system factors associated with hypertension control in Ghana

Implications

• It is important to institutionalize hypertension management interventions that have been shown effective to improve hypertension control in Ghana
• Further research is needed to identify the factors that hinder the implementation of hypertension control programs in Ghana
• Health systems strengthening interventions should focus on strengthening the health workforce, improving the availability and accessibility of hypertension detection tools, and providing adequate training for health providers on hypertension management