

HIPERTENSÃO ARTERIAL EM ADULTOS JOVENS: FATORES DE RISCO, DIAGNÓSTICO E PREVENÇÃO

ARTERIAL HYPERTENSION IN YOUNG ADULTS: RISK FACTORS, DIAGNOSIS, AND PREVENTION

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Eixo Temático: saúde

RESUMO

A hipertensão arterial constitui importante fator de risco para doenças cardiovasculares e, embora sua prevalência aumente com a idade, também pode estar presente em adultos jovens. A ocorrência precoce de níveis pressóricos elevados é relevante devido à possibilidade de exposição prolongada ao fator de risco cardiovascular e à presença de condições potencialmente modificáveis ou secundárias. O objetivo desta revisão é analisar os principais fatores associados à hipertensão arterial em adultos jovens, bem como aspectos relacionados ao diagnóstico, à investigação de causas secundárias e à prevenção. Foi realizada uma revisão narrativa da literatura nas bases PubMed/MEDLINE, SciELO e LILACS, utilizando descritores relacionados a hipertensão arterial, adultos jovens, fatores de risco e hipertensão secundária, combinados por operadores booleanos. Foram priorizados estudos publicados nos últimos dez anos, além de diretrizes e trabalhos considerados relevantes para a compreensão do tema. Os estudos identificam associação entre hipertensão em adultos jovens e fatores como excesso de peso, sedentarismo, consumo elevado de sal, tabagismo, consumo de álcool e hábitos de vida inadequados. Evidências recentes também demonstram frequência relevante de causas secundárias nessa população, destacando a importância da investigação etiológica. Conclui-se que a hipertensão arterial em adultos jovens representa importante problema de saúde e demanda estratégias de identificação precoce, controle dos fatores de risco e investigação adequada de causas secundárias, visando reduzir o risco cardiovascular ao longo da vida.

Palavras-chave: Adultos Jovens; Diagnóstico; Fatores de Risco; Hipertensão; Prevenção.

ABSTRACT

Arterial hypertension is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease; although its prevalence increases with age, it can also occur in young adults. The early onset of elevated blood pressure is significant due to the potential for prolonged exposure to this cardiovascular risk factor and the possible presence of secondary or potentially modifiable conditions. This review aims to analyze the main factors associated with arterial hypertension in young adults, as well as aspects related to diagnosis, the investigation of secondary causes, and prevention. A narrative literature review was conducted using the PubMed/MEDLINE, SciELO, and LILACS databases, employing descriptors related to arterial hypertension, young adults, risk factors, and secondary hypertension, combined using Boolean operators. Priority was given to studies published within the last ten years, as well as guidelines and other works considered relevant to understanding the topic. Studies identify associations between hypertension in young adults and factors such as excess weight, a sedentary lifestyle, high salt intake, smoking, alcohol consumption, and unhealthy lifestyle habits. Recent evidence also demonstrates a significant frequency of secondary causes in this population, highlighting the importance of etiological investigation. In conclusion, arterial hypertension in young adults represents a significant health issue that requires strategies for early identification, risk factor control, and appropriate investigation of secondary causes, with the aim of reducing lifetime cardiovascular risk.

Keywords: Young Adults; Diagnosis; Risk Factors; Hypertension; Prevention.

INTRODUÇÃO

Arterial hypertension is a major chronic condition associated with the development of cardiovascular, cerebrovascular, and renal diseases. In Brazil, data from the 2019 National

Health Survey indicated that 23.9% of individuals aged 18 or older reported a medical diagnosis of hypertension. Among people aged 18 to 29, this proportion was 2.8%, demonstrating that, despite its lower prevalence in younger individuals, the disease is also present in this population.⁴

Arterial hypertension in young adults warrants particular attention due to the potential for prolonged exposure to elevated blood pressure levels throughout life. Studies show that elevated blood pressure during this stage is associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease later in life, underscoring the importance of early identification and control.⁵

Factors associated with hypertension in young adults include excess weight, a sedentary lifestyle, high salt intake, smoking, alcohol consumption, and poor dietary habits.¹ These factors are particularly significant because they are potentially modifiable through prevention and health promotion strategies.

In addition to lifestyle-related factors, early-onset hypertension may be associated with secondary causes. In a study involving hypertensive individuals aged 18 to 40, 29.6% presented an identifiable secondary cause; primary hyperaldosteronism, renovascular hypertension, and renal diseases were among the leading etiologies identified.²

Given this context, it is important to understand the characteristics of arterial hypertension in young adults and the factors associated with its development, as well as the importance of accurate diagnosis and the investigation of secondary causes. Thus, the aim of this review was to analyze the main risk factors, diagnostic aspects, and secondary causes associated with arterial hypertension in young adults, highlighting the importance of early detection and intervention.

MÉTODOS

A narrative literature review on arterial hypertension in young adults was conducted.

A literature search was performed using the PubMed/MEDLINE, SciELO, and LILACS databases. Descriptors in both Portuguese and English related to the topic were used, including “hipertensão arterial,” “adultos jovens,” “fatores de risco,” “hipertensão secundária,” “hypertension,” “young adults,” “risk factors,” and “secondary hypertension.”

The descriptors were combined using the Boolean operators AND and OR, employing strategies such as “hypertension” AND “young adults,” “hypertension” AND “young adults” AND “risk factors,” and “hypertension” AND “young adults” AND “secondary hypertension.”

Priority was given to articles published within the last ten years, as well as guidelines and studies deemed relevant to understanding the topic. Studies addressing arterial hypertension in young adults—including risk factors, diagnosis, secondary hypertension, prevention, or treatment—were included. Studies not directly related to the review's objective, duplicate works, and studies focused exclusively on the pediatric population were excluded.

Study selection involved analyzing titles and abstracts, followed by an evaluation of the works considered pertinent. The findings were organized into thematic categories regarding epidemiology, risk factors, diagnosis, secondary causes, and prevention and treatment strategies.

RESULTADOS

The studies analyzed demonstrate that arterial hypertension, while more frequent with advancing age, also represents a significant condition among young adults. Brazilian data

indicate a self-reported medical diagnosis rate of 2.8% among individuals aged 18 to 29 in 2019, highlighting the presence of the disease even in younger age groups.⁴

Key factors associated with hypertension in young adults include excess weight, a sedentary lifestyle, smoking, alcohol consumption, high salt intake, and poor dietary habits. A systematic review identified these factors as significant elements associated with the development of hypertension in this population, underscoring the influence of modifiable lifestyle habits.¹

The link between elevated blood pressure in youth and future cardiovascular risk has also been documented in the literature. Early and prolonged exposure to elevated blood pressure levels can contribute to the development of target-organ damage and cardiovascular events over the course of a lifetime.⁵

Regarding diagnosis, the 2025 Brazilian Guideline on Arterial Hypertension emphasizes the importance of accurate blood pressure measurement and diagnostic confirmation when indicated, including the use of out-of-office methods such as ambulatory blood pressure monitoring and home blood pressure monitoring.³

Another relevant finding was the prevalence of secondary hypertension among young adults. In a study of 2,090 hypertensive individuals aged 18 to 40 who underwent etiological investigation, 29.6% presented with secondary hypertension. The primary causes were primary hyperaldosteronism, renovascular hypertension, and primary renal disease.²

Thus, the findings indicate that the assessment of young adults with hypertension should consider both lifestyle-related factors and clinical characteristics that might suggest a secondary etiology. Early identification of these factors enables the implementation of preventive and therapeutic measures capable of reducing cumulative cardiovascular exposure.

CONCLUSÃO

The literature indicates that arterial hypertension is also present among young adults and is significantly associated with modifiable factors, particularly excess weight, a sedentary lifestyle, high salt and alcohol intake, smoking, and unhealthy lifestyle habits. Early identification of elevated blood pressure is important due to the potential for prolonged cardiovascular exposure and the risk of developing complications over the course of a lifetime. Furthermore, the frequency of secondary causes observed in young hypertensive patients underscores the need for appropriate clinical assessment and etiological investigation when indicated. Prevention, early diagnosis, risk factor modification, and appropriate treatment can help reduce future cardiovascular risk. Further studies are needed to expand knowledge regarding specific strategies for screening, prevention, and management of hypertension in this population.

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