May Measurement Month 2019: an analysis of blood pressure screening results from China

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To report the blood pressure (BP) data obtained in the May Measurement Month (MMM) 2019 in China. Study participants were recruited if ≥18 years of age and had ideally not had their BP measured for ≥1 year. BP was measured three times consecutively with a 1-min interval in the sitting position, using a validated electronic BP monitor. Trained volunteer investigators administered a questionnaire to collect information on lifestyle, medical history, and use of medications. The measurement was performed in 238,387 participants in 250 sites across 31 China provinces. The majority of screening took place in hospitals or clinics (78.7%), with 17.1% in outdoor public areas and 4.2% in other settings. The study participants included 127,853 women (53.6%) and had a mean (±SD) age of 48.9 ± 16.2 years. The mean (of readings two and three) systolic/diastolic BP was 121.8/73.8 mmHg. In all hypertensive patients (n = 66,181, 27.8%), the awareness, treatment, and control rates of hypertension were 51.5%, 48.4%, and 29.1%, respectively. Linear regression models showed differences in systolic and diastolic BP according to sex and age and several other...
Introduction

As one of the Chinese nationwide initiatives for improving management of hypertension, the May Measurement Month (MMM) project has been successfully carried out for three successive years since 2017. The May Measurement Month (MMM) project in China strictly followed the international study started, including standardized BP measurement techniques. The study protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee of Ruijin Hospital, Shanghai Jiaotong University School of Medicine, Shanghai, China. All participants provided written informed consent.

Eligible participants were volunteer adults aged 18 years or over, who had ideally not taken BP measurement in the previous year. BP was measured three times consecutively with an 1-min interval in the sitting position after at least 5 min rest, using a validated automatic BP monitor (HEM-9200T, Omron Healthcare or TM2656, A&D). The mean of the 2nd and 3rd readings was averaged for analysis. Hypertension was defined as a BP of at least 140 mmHg systolic or 90 mmHg diastolic, or the use of antihypertensive medication. Controlled BP was defined as a BP below 140 mmHg systolic and 90 mmHg diastolic in treated hypertensive patients. Trained volunteer investigators administered a questionnaire via a WeChat quick response code to collect information on lifestyle, medical history, and use of medications. Body height, body weight, and waist and hip circumferences for each participant were measured. Body mass index (BMI) was calculated as the body weight in kilograms divided by the body height in metres squared. Overweight and obesity were defined as a BMI of 25.0–29.9 and ≥30.0 kg/m², respectively.

Data were analysed centrally by the MMM project team and multiple imputations performed to impute the mean of the 2nd and 3rd readings where this was missing, based on the global data. All statistical analysis methods were described in detail previously.

Methods

The MMM China project strictly followed the international MMM 2019 protocol, which had been previously described in detail elsewhere. The project was conducted in 250 sites across 31 China provinces from May to September 2019. Measurement sites were mostly inside hospitals or community health centres, but usually located in a public area instead of doctors’ offices for routine clinical service. All investigators received standard training before the study started, including standardized BP measurement techniques. The study protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee of Ruijin Hospital, Shanghai Jiaotong University School of Medicine, Shanghai, China. All participants provided written informed consent.

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Results

The 238,387 participants included 127,853 women (53.6%) and had a mean (±SD) age of 48.9 ± 16.2 years, and a mean BMI of 23.5 ± 3.2 kg/m². In total, 57,848 (24.3%) were overweight and 7,372 (3.1%) obese. A total of 179,231 (75.2%) reported that they had no BP measurement taken in the previous year. In total, 32,034 (13.4%) were on antihypertensive medication. Of the 32,030 persons with a recorded number of antihypertensive medication classes, 63.9% were taking a single medication, and 36.1% were taking ≥2 medications. In total, 9,035 (3.8%) were taking aspirin and 7,316 (3.0%) on statins. Of all participants, 12,154 (5.1%) self-reported having diabetes mellitus, 12,948 (5.4%) a history of myocardial infarction, and 6,493 (2.7%) a history of stroke, and 16,906 (7.1%) were current smokers, and 18,050 (7.6%) reported drinking alcohol one to three times per month (4.6%), and once or more per week (3.0%). Among women, 1,125 (0.9%) were pregnant at the time of screening, and 109 (0.1%) reported a history of hypertension in a previous pregnancy. The majority of screening took place in hospitals or clinics (78.7%), with 17.1% in outdoor public areas and 4.0% in other settings. In total, 197,521 (82.9%) participants were screened on weekdays and 40,866 (17.1%) on weekends.

In the 234,258 participants with all three individual BP readings, the mean systolic/diastolic BP decreased from 123.9/75.1 mmHg for the first reading to 122.2/74.0 mmHg for the 2nd and 121.1/73.3 mmHg for the 3rd, with a corresponding decrease of the prevalence of hypertension from 31.4% to 29.1% to 27.8%. After multiple imputations, of all participants, 12,154 (5.1%) self-reported having diabetes mellitus, 12,948 (5.4%) a history of myocardial infarction, and 6,493 (2.7%) a history of stroke, and 16,906 (7.1%) were current smokers, and 18,050 (7.6%) reported drinking alcohol one to three times per month (4.6%), and once or more per week (3.0%). Among women, 1,125 (0.9%) were pregnant at the time of screening, and 109 (0.1%) reported a history of hypertension in a previous pregnancy. The majority of screening took place in hospitals or clinics (78.7%), with 17.1% in outdoor public areas and 4.0% in other settings. In total, 197,521 (82.9%) participants were screened on weekdays and 40,866 (17.1%) on weekends.

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Discussion

Our opportunistic screening showed that the proportion of hypertension among these Chinese adults screened was 27.8%, and the awareness, treatment, and control rates were 51.5%, 48.4%, and 29.1%, respectively. These observations were similar to the results of MMM 2017 and 2018 in China and showed a slightly and gradually improved management of hypertension in China in the past several years.

The present study and the data obtained in the years of 2017 and 2018 repeatedly and consistently showed that BP was higher in those who were overweight or obese compared with those of a healthy weight. This observation needs to be further investigated, with regard to its ecological implications between provinces to better understand the contribution of obesity to the prevalence of hypertension in China.

The MMM 2019 project included more measurement sites outside clinics/hospitals than in previous campaigns. Indeed, there were measurement sites in public places, workplaces, and pharmacies. This expansion in measurement sites involved a newly established BP measurement system, which was web-based and WeChat-linked and allowed automatic transmission of BP readings to a central platform for BP measurement in the community.

In conclusion, the MMM 2019 has been successful in measuring BP in a large member of participants from communities in almost all provinces in China. With time, the project will help achieve the recently defined goal to improve the control rate of hypertension to 50% in China by 2030.

Supplementary material

Supplementary material is available at European Heart Journal Supplements online.

Table 1

| Total participants | Number (%) with hypertension | Number (%) of hypertensive patients | Number (%) of hypertensive patients on medication | Number (%) of those on blood pressure | Number (%) of all controlled blood pressure |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 238 387            | 66 181 (27.8)                | 34 059 (51.5)                      | 32 034 (48.4)                                | 19 283 (60.2)                       | 19 283 (29.1)                           |

Linear regression models showed differences in systolic and diastolic BP according to sex, age, previous stroke, myocardial infarction, and diabetes mellitus, antihypertensive medication use and known hypertension, previous hypertension in pregnancy and current pregnancy, alcohol intake and current smoking, and BMI (Supplementary material online, Figures S1-S6).

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Data availability statement

All data are confidential in nature and may only be provided with permission of authorities.

Conflict of interest: J.-G.W. reports having received lecture and consulting fees from Novartis, Omron, and Servier. The other authors declared no conflict of interest.

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