

## Press Release

# World Hypertension day May 17<sup>th</sup> 2014

### **Hypertension is a silent killer!**

A joint collaboration by the American Society of Hypertension and the World Hypertension League has joined forces to challenge the world to measure 100,000 blood pressure measurements by the end of the day. The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados, a long advocate of hypertension control has risen to the challenge to put Barbados on the world map which will light up as each country provides its numbers during the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific meeting in New York.

With Hypertension more commonly known as high blood pressure being one of the most common risk factors for heart attack and stroke in Barbados the day really helps to focus the general public on the necessity of needing to know your numbers. Gone are the days when patients put their arm forward for testing without asking a question, many have their own machines at home and can now give the medical profession a list of their recordings, but one still has to ask what the value of knowing your results is.

It is estimated that around 25,000 women have hypertension in Barbados with 1 out of 2 heart attacks occurring in women,( Barbados National Registry for chronic non –communicable disease 2012) the plight of the fairer sex is not a good one, this together with an increase in obesity and salt intake are placing this nation on a road of no return. Research has also shown that men consume more salt and alcohol than the recommended levels all of which increase the risk of higher blood pressure readings.

Hypertension is a silent killer, with the journey along the pathway providing a path of destruction by damaging vital organs such as the eyes, kidneys, brain and heart. There is however some good news, one can prevent the risk of hypertension through modifying lifestyle ....heard it all before -the message gets boring you may say...but why then is it falling on deaf ears?

The facts speak for themselves, simple reduction in salt can reduce a person's blood pressure by 2-8mmHg and losing weight can reduce the measurement by up to 10 mmHg/10kg, now if one takes up a physical activity which makes them breathless for at least 30 minutes up to 5 times a week, the measurement can be even better.

Ensuring compliance with medication as prescribed is another regime which can produce good results, if side effects including impotence, breathlessness and lethargy are seen then this should always be discussed with a medical practitioner. The value of complementary medicine is also becoming more acceptable with yoga and meditation being some of the highly rated complimentary options by the American Heart Association to assist with the reduction of blood pressure.

Technology has brought us a long way both in the physical measurement of blood pressure but also in the level of information that we garner. The bottom line is that without having a series of measurements recorded on a validated blood pressure machine searching for the optimal blood pressure of 120/80 is futile. With figures up to 140/90 on a regular basis a medical review is required, so

use World Hypertension day to begin with a new challenge, **know your numbers**, reduce your salt and start to listen to your body. Get your cardiovascular screening done today.