

Treat Hypertension?

“Hypertension (High Blood Pressure) May Halt Dementia in Elderly.”



Among individuals who developed hypertension at age 90 or later, their risk of also developing dementia was dramatically lower than other very elderly people whose blood pressure remained normal, researchers said here.

In fact, among individuals

surviving to age 90, hypertension was clearly not a risk factor for dementia no matter when it began, according to a presentation at the Alzheimer’s Association International Conference.

Could it be that the brain is causing the elevation of blood pressure as a protective measure?

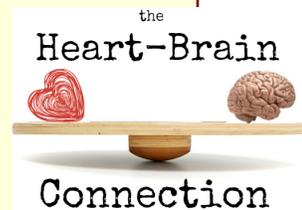
Unexpected Result!

Hypertension has long been thought to exacerbate dementias. New research appears to show just the opposite. Even more importantly, the severity of hypertension was also associated with reduced risk. Participants with systolic pressure of 160 mm Hg or higher, or diastolic pressure of 100 mm Hg or more, lower risk compared with participants with systolic pressure below 120 mmHg or diastolic pressure below 80 mm Hg.

Lesser degrees of hypertension were commensurately associated with a lesser decrease in dementia risk.

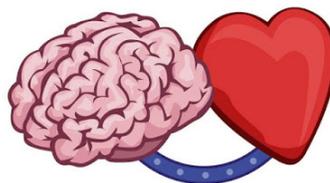
Researchers showed an almost perfectly linear trend between blood pressure and risk.

Development of hypertension "at older ages may be beneficial for maintaining intact cognition" – perhaps by preserving blood flow and oxygenation in the brain.



Hypertension and Dementia

A recent study by University of California research Maria Corrada shows that elevated blood pressure may not be a risk factor for dementia. Dr. Corrada studied 14,000+ participants in the Leisure World Cohort Study, which began in 1981. The study revealed that patients with hypertension in their 90s had lower risk for dementia compared to those with normal blood pressure.



Participants who developed hypertension while in their 80s also had a lower risk for dementia compared with those with normal blood pressure. Those with hypertension first diagnosed or reported earlier - even prior to age 70 - showed no significant increase in dementia risk.