

## Conference of the Croatian Hypertension League - “The Silent Killer Hunt - Stress The Omnipresent Demon”

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The conference organized by the Croatian Hypertension League “The Silent Killer Hunt - Stress the Omnipresent Demon” was held on November 9 at the Faculty of Medicine in Zagreb, under the wing of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and brought together experts from the medical community, health workers, industry, and the curious public.

The central theme of the conference was stress as a serious risk factor for arterial hypertension, and different perspectives on this topic were discussed through panel discussions and lectures. Medical experts, including academic Vida Demarin and academics Bojan Jelaković and Davor Miličić, led panel discussions focused on understanding stress as an omnipresent demon and its impact on arterial health. The panel discussions emphasized the importance of awareness of arterial hypertension as a major public health problem in Croatia. In addition to doctors of various specialties, nurses, and pharmacists, nutritionists and kinesiologists participated as mandatory members of teams for the care of patients with chronic non-communicable diseases, as well as meteorologists, climatologists, and people from public life, pharmaceutical, publishing, food, and digital industries. Since yoga and mindful-

ness are mentioned in the new guidelines as a new “auxiliary tool” for treating patients with arterial hypertension, these experts were also panelists.

The specifics that women experience in the context of stress were highlighted at the conference. Associate Professor Valerija Bralić-Lang emphasized the accumulation of stress in women due to family obligations, which is an important aspect of understanding and approach to prevention and treatment. The panels covered various topics, from lifestyle habits and stress at work to digital transformation and stress, and the impact of climate change on arterial hypertension. All these topics have expanded knowledge about the link between stress and health. The topics for the panel discussions were: Silent killer number 1 in Croatia - yesterday, today, tomorrow; Stress as a permanently omnipresent demon; Women and stress; Life habits and stress; Stress at work; Digital transformation and stress; Stress due to climate change and impact on arterial hypertension and total risk; White coat hypertension and masked hypertension as markers of present stress.

The results of the national study EH-UH 2 (Epidemiology of Hypertension in Croatia) and the MMM (May Measurement



Month) project were also highlighted at the conference, which shows an increase in the prevalence of hypertension in Croatia from 37% to 50%! Every second adult in Croatia has elevated blood pressure values, which indicates a serious challenge in public health. The need for primary prevention, a multidisciplinary approach, and the role of different health professionals was emphasized. The Croatian Hypertension League announces a new project to increase health literacy, increasing adherence, but also reducing clinical inertia. In the program called 70/26, the goal is for 70% of treated patients to reach the target blood pressure values by 2026. Symptoms of arterial hypertension usually develop imperceptibly over the years, without any signs or symptoms, and later lead to serious complications such as heart disease, stroke, chronic kidney disease, and other problems. Namely, arterial hypertension is responsible for over 40% of deaths per year in Croatia, and around 30% of Croatian residents suffer from hypertensive diseases, which places us in the unenviable group of countries least aware of the treatment of the “silent killer” and makes this conference even more important for the general health of the population.

The conference “The Silent Killer Hunt - Stress the Omnipresent Demon” represents an important step in raising awareness of the seriousness of arterial hypertension and promoting preventive measures. In addition, the importance of cooperation between different sectors in the community to jointly face this serious public health threat was emphasized.

