



BLOOD PRESSURE CONTROL FOR HEALTHIER SEAFARERS

**the C.I.R.M. and CIRM SERVIZI contribution to the
WORLD HEART DAY 2024**



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Introduction

Arterial hypertension, in general more simply indicated as hypertension remains a leading cause of death globally, accounting for 10.4 million deaths per year. This alarming statistic highlights the significant burden that high blood pressure places on global health. It is one of the significant risk factors for cardiovascular diseases that leading deaths from diseases among seafarers.

The prevalence of hypertension among seafarers is significantly higher than the general population, ranging from 8.2% to 60.0%. This high prevalence can be attributed to several factors unique to seafarers' work environment and lifestyle. One of the main contributing factors is the stressful nature of seafaring. Seafarers often face demanding work environments, long hours, and challenging conditions. This chronic stress can contribute to the development of high blood pressure and other cardiovascular conditions. Hypertension is characterized by a sustained elevation in systolic blood pressure (SBP) or maximum blood pressure and diastolic blood pressure (DBP) or minimum blood pressure. The definition commonly used for hypertension is a systolic BP of at least 140 millimetres of mercury (mmHg) and a diastolic BP of at least 90 mmHg. Prehypertension refers to a condition in which the blood pressure falls within a specific range. The diagnostic criterion for prehypertension is a systolic pressure between 120 and 130 mmHg and a diastolic pressure between 80 and 89 mmHg. These values represent the upper end of the normal range and indicate an increased risk of developing hypertension.

On World Heart Day 2024, the Centro Internazionale Radio Medico (C.I.R.M.), the Italian Telemedical Maritime Assistance Service (TMAS) and his spin-off CIRM SERVIZI decided to promote a campaign for a better awareness of the risks of hypertension among seafarers aimed at reducing the prevalence of high blood pressure among this category of workers. through evidence-based maritime health policy. By promoting awareness among seafarers about hypertension, its measurement, and prevention strategies, we aim to reduce the burden of hypertension and cardiovascular diseases onboard ships.

Blood Pressure Measurement

A health care professional or a trained ship officer can take appropriate blood pressure measurements of seafarers by following the following steps:

1. Before measuring blood pressure, seafarers should sit in a comfortable chair with their back supported for at least 5 minutes. It is important to maintain a relaxed posture during this waiting period to obtain accurate results. To ensure accurate readings, seafarers should place both feet flat on the ground and keep their legs

uncrossed. This position helps minimize any interference or distractions that may affect blood pressure measurements.



2. Place the arm with the blood pressure cuff on a table at chest height. Ensure that the cuff is snug but not too tight, allowing for proper blood circulation and the cuff should be against your bare skin, not over clothing.



3. Seafarers should not talk while their blood pressure is being measured. Once seafarers are seated comfortably, rested, and positioned correctly, start the blood pressure measurement process. Follow the manufacturer's instructions closely and press the start or measurement button as per the instructions provided.



4. The stethoscope is not required if a healthcare professional uses a digital or automatic blood pressure cuff. Instead, the displayed readings from the cuff provide healthcare professionals with a means of assessing seafarers' blood pressure levels. Digital and automatic blood pressure cuffs are technologically advanced devices that are designed to measure the blood pressure of individuals. These devices use various sensors and algorithms to accurately determine blood pressure levels without the need for stethoscope auscultation.



5. Digital or automatic blood pressure cuffs can provide healthcare professionals with real-time readings, allowing for immediate evaluation and intervention if required. This rapid assessment can be particularly beneficial in emergencies or when immediate medical intervention is necessary.

Controlling blood pressure

Controlling your blood pressure starts with making lifestyle changes. By losing weight, increasing activity, and eating more healthfully, you can significantly reduce the risk of high blood pressure and heart disease. By incorporating a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats into their diet, individuals can help control blood pressure. Limiting processed foods, sugary snacks, and beverages high in sodium can also contribute to lower blood pressure. By making these positive changes in your daily routine, you can contribute to a healthier and longer life. If a user's blood pressure falls into the pre-hypertension classification (SBP 120 to 139 mmHg or DBP 80 to 89 mmHg). A teleconsultation with C.I.R.M. or CIRM SERVIZI should be scheduled for a lifestyle change (modification), and the user should be reassessed every six months or based on the health care professionals schedule should reassess. However, if the user has risk factors, it is recommended to reassess frequently.

All seafarers in the hypertension category qualify for treatment, whereas those in the elevated BP category will be subject to cardiovascular risk stratification before a treatment decision is made.

Our recommendation

We suggest crew members to measure their blood pressure in the occasion of the World Heart Day (29 September 2024). Do measurement in the morning before breakfast and take a note of your blood pressure values.

For any questions, please feel free to contact C.I.R.M. telemedical service or for subscribing ships CIRM PREMIUM service.

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