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Assessment and record of cardiovascular risk in hypertensive patients: a quality improvement study

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Background & Aim: Cardiovascular disease (CVD) remains the major cause of premature death in Europe, even though its mortality has fallen over recent decades. It is also an important cause of disability, inducing inherent health costs. Hypertension is a major CVD risk factor.

A risk estimation system such as Systematic Coronary Risk Evaluation (SCORE) allows making logical management decisions, and may help to avoid both under and over-treatment. According to guidelines, adults aged between 40 and 65 years must have their CVD risk assessed.

The aim of this study is to evaluate and improve the quality of the assessment and registration of CVD risk in hypertensive patients from two primary health care centres of Portugal.

Method: This is a quality improvement, retrospective, descriptive study, regarding hypertensive patients receiving their management at one of the primary care centres, aged between 40 and 65 years. Electronic patient records were consulted and registered in a Microsoft Excel® database.

Study variables: gender, age, assessment and record of CVD risk in the last 36 months. Quality patterns: very good ($\geq 90\%$), good ($\geq 80\%$ but $< 90\%$), sufficient ($\geq 60\%$ but $< 80\%$) and insufficient ($< 60\%$).

Intervention: results of the first evaluation were presented and discussed at both units; the authors developed an oral presentation about the importance of the assessment of CVD risk.

Results: The study included 396 patients. At first evaluation, assessment and record of the CVD risk was performed in 76% of patients from the first unit and in 74% of patients from the second unit.

Conclusions: First evaluation showed a sufficient quality pattern of records in both centres. However, because of the importance of CVD risk assessment for the management of hypertensive patients, it is still necessary to improve this outcomes. Second evaluation will be performed in May 2016.