

Stress Management Summit

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Non-pharmaceutical stress management & lifestyle change program (heal stress study) for blood pressure control and psychosocial wellbeing in 266 patients in Attica, Greece: A qualitative report

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Lifestyle interventions for blood pressure (BP) treatment are characterized by a low adherence rate. Self-management is integral for BP treatment and involves the acquisition of new skills. Stress management and lifestyle change programs seem to have an additional effect in the development of self-management and BP control. This was a quasi-experimental design with a waitlist control group and was funded from EPANAD 2007-2013. The study comprised an 8-week stress management and lifestyle change program, including weekly sessions (stress management, dietary counseling and physical exercise). In the 8th week, qualitative data were recorded. All semi-structured interviews were transcribed, and coding derived from repeated themes. Post-intervention, 53.8% of the participants reported walking more than 8,000, steps/day (17.3% reported walking over 10,000, steps/day). According to the WHO, a mean of 10,000, steps/day is required for a healthy lifestyle. Regarding dietary habits, there was a significant increase in water and vegetable/fruit consumption (80.9% and 76.4%, respectively) and a significant reduction in sodium intake (80.9%). Approximately, 60.9% of the participants experienced significant improvement sleep quality. Relaxation breathing and progressive muscular relaxation were implemented by 80.1% of the sample. Approximately 43.6% of the participants mentioned positive thinking and anger management, and 35.3% reported better mood regulation and a sense of relaxation. Of the 19.5% of the participants who reported BP regulation/reduction, 10.8% devoted more time to themselves, and 9% managed to set goals. This non-pharmaceutical stress management and lifestyle change program resulted in significant benefits of the regulation of BP as well as for lifestyle change.

Biography

Christina Darviri is Professor of Prevention and Health Promotion. Since 2008, she has been serving as the co-Scientific director with professor G.Chrousos of the MSc/PhD Program entitled "The Science of Stress and Health Promotion" at the Medical School of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece. She lectures on stress-related nosology, lifestyle and stress, efficient stress management and the overall connection between stress and health promotion. She has published over 50 peer-reviewed articles in the field of stress. She has also supervised over 100 theses on stress, health and disease and published many books. She has been the principal investigator of many research projects, focusing on issues such as healthy longevity and how life style impacts stress resilience, as well as how to effectively auto regulate hypertension through stress management and health promotion. Her latest scientific project is a technique called "Pythagorean Self-awareness for Stress Management, Memory Improvement and Sense of Well-being".

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