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## Hypertension among university workers

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**Introduction:** The prevalence, awareness and control of hypertension are important epidemiological research topics worldwide. This study was conducted as part of assessment of the general well being of the staff of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi, Ghana to determine the prevalence of hypertension.

**Methods:** In a cross-sectional survey, the blood pressure (BP) of members of staff was measured with the University sphygmomanometer. BP readings 140/90 mmHg or higher was considered as hypertensive BP, whilst a systolic reading of 140 mmHg with a lower diastolic reading ( $\leq 90$  mmHg) and vice versa were considered as isolated systolic hypertension (ISH) or isolated diastolic hypertension (IDH) respectively. Analysis of data was by SPSS version 17.

**Results:** A total of 2057 members of staff of KNUST were studied. Of these, 36.9% were found to have hypertension, Isolated Diastolic Hypertension (IDH) or Isolated Systolic Hypertension (ISH). The highest prevalence of abnormal blood pressures was found among senior members (43%) followed by senior staffs (37.5%) and junior staff making up 26%. Males were more likely to have higher blood pressures than females of comparable age groups. The age group 41-50 years had the highest number of abnormal blood pressures in all three staff categories.

**Discussion:** This study provides first hand information on the groups that need to be targeted and given further medical attention in a follow-up. Social status does contribute to the risk of hypertension, although everyone is at risk. The improvement of the management of hypertension should decrease the cardiovascular risk in the hypertensive population.

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