



PRESS RELEASE

South Africa is proud to support May Measurement Month 2024

People in South Africa encouraged to get screened for high blood pressure

South Africa 1 May 2024: As May Measurement Month (MMM) enters its 7th year, South Africa is excited to announce their involvement in this landmark global blood pressure screening initiative. They call upon the general public in South Africa to take advantage of this important opportunity to get their blood pressure tested.

Raised blood pressure (BP), or hypertension, is the single biggest risk factor responsible for mortality worldwide¹. It is estimated that in South Africa alone, 26.5% have raised blood pressure, putting them at risk of some serious long-term complications if left untreated. The majority of people with raised hypertension are either completely unaware of actually having it, and are untreated, or are on treatment which is not effectively controlling their condition. As the condition has no noticeable symptoms, blood pressure measurement is the only accurate way of identifying hypertension, and therefore of critical importance. The good news is that BP is easy and inexpensive to measure, and if diagnosed early enough can be managed through maintaining a healthy lifestyle or if required through the use of a number of effective drug treatments that are available to control hypertension.

This was the impetus behind MMM – a global campaign aimed at raising awareness of high blood pressure, its potential long-term implications and the importance of controlling it. It is the world's largest free public blood pressure screening campaign and from May until July, volunteers around the world will measure the blood pressure of people in their cities, towns and villages. South Africa are proud to be running May Measurement Month in their country and aim to get as many of the local population tested. All participants leave knowing their blood pressure level and anyone who is registered as hypertensive is given advice about what to do next.

Since the launch of May Measurement Month, over 6 million people have been screened in 100 countries across the world. South Africa is pleased to be participating again and are looking forward to testing as many people as possible.

In 2022, May Measurement Month identified that 62.5% of people with hypertension in South Africa who were not aware and 16.5% of people on anti-hypertensive treatment were not effectively controlled. The campaign provided a significant cross-sectional survey of blood pressure in adults across the world.

MMM's Chief Investigator, Professor Neil Poulter, said: 'Raised blood pressure remains the biggest single contributing risk factor for global death and the worldwide burden of disease. We want May Measurement Month to increase public understanding and help save lives that need not be lost.'

Please visit maymeasure.org for more information about the campaign and how to get tested

Notes to Editors

About hypertension

Raised blood pressure (BP) remains the biggest single contributor to global death and global burden of disease². It is estimated that in 2019 about 19% of all deaths (10.8 million) were due to raised BP, having risen from 9.4 million deaths in 2014.³ Hypertension causes over 50% of cases of heart disease, stroke and heart failure.⁴ and it is estimated that about 10% of global health care spending arises from raised BP and its complications⁵. Moreover, hypertension-mediated organ damage increases risk of severe infections from COVID-19, including risk of death.⁶

About MMM

May Measurement Month is a global blood pressure screening awareness campaign, launched in 2017 by our founding organisation, the International Society of Hypertension.

Its aim is to highlight the importance of measuring your blood pressure (BP) and to raise awareness of the dangers posed by elevated BP and hypertension. Its target is to increase the numbers of participants aged 18+ who are regularly getting their BP checked and to give people the tools to understand how this information can contribute to people's knowledge about their individual health. On a broader level, MMM uses the data on inadequately treated hypertension to motivate governments to improve BP screening facilities and reduce the huge global burden of disease and death caused by raised BP.

For more information about South Africa's participation in May Measurement Month or to speak to the programme lead, Professor Angela Woodiwiss, please email angela.woodiwiss@wits.ac.za.

Thank you to MMM partners; OMRON (www.omron-healthcare.co.uk) and SERVIER (www.servier.com)

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