

Catholic Sisters Elderly Care Network Ghana's Zoom Meeting

Topic: Overcoming the Impact of Hypertension and Diabetes through Prevention and Early Comprehensive Intervention

Quick recap

The Catholic Sisters Elderly Care Network, Ghana hosted a webinar on "Overcoming the Impact of Hypertension and Diabetes through Prevention and Early Comprehensive Intervention." Dr. Mrs. Phyllis Tawiah, a geriatrician and director of the Center for Aging and Elderly Care at Metro Health Hospital, presented comprehensive information on hypertension mechanisms, risk factors, management strategies, and diabetes prevention and control. The presentation covered the DASH diet, exercise recommendations, weight management, medication adherence, and the importance of regular blood pressure and blood sugar monitoring. Sisters asked questions about specific treatments, herbal remedies, exercise watches, and dietary recommendations, with Dr. Phyllis Tawiah providing detailed responses about appropriate interventions and lifestyle modifications. The session concluded with plans to share the presentation slides and YouTube link with participants for future reference.

Key Points

1. Plant and grow vegetables, fruits, and healthy food options (e.g., spinach, dandelion, avocado, apple, orange) in convent gardens or containers to improve access to healthy produce.
2. Implement and follow the DASH diet and diabetes-friendly dietary guidelines in community meal planning, including portion control, increased vegetables, and reduced salt and processed foods.
3. Regularly monitor blood pressure and blood sugar (A1C) at recommended intervals; ensure each convent has at least one working blood pressure machine.
4. Engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise weekly, combined with two days of resistance/strengthening exercise, as advised by Dr. Mrs. Phillips.
5. Practice stress management techniques, prioritize 7-9 hours of sleep, and reduce stressors (e.g., limit phone/WhatsApp use, practice mindfulness/meditation).

6. Limit alcohol, quit smoking, and reduce intake of over-the-counter medications that may raise blood pressure (e.g., ibuprofen, decongestants, caffeine, steroids).
7. Take prescribed hypertension and diabetes medications as directed; do not stop or change medications without consulting a doctor.
8. Share the presentation slides and YouTube link with those unable to attend, and encourage ongoing education on hypertension and diabetes management.
9. For those with symptoms of neuropathy or unexplained symptoms (e.g., tingling, dizziness), consult a doctor for appropriate evaluation and treatment, including possible nerve repair medications and vitamin support.
10. If managing diabetes, monitor A1C every 3 months if uncontrolled, and work with doctors to set and review personalized management plans.
11. Encourage and support each other in healthy lifestyle changes, especially in community settings, and consider making healthy eating and exercise a regular group activity.
12. Organize future webinars on related health topics and continue to share educational resources with members.

Summary

Hypertension and Diabetes Prevention Webinar

Sr. Immaculate welcomed participants to a webinar on overcoming hypertension and diabetes through prevention and early intervention, organized by the Catholic Sisters Elderly Care Network, Ghana. Dr. Phyllis, a geriatrician and presenter, explained the mechanisms, risks, and impacts of hypertension and diabetes, emphasizing the importance of early screening and lifestyle modifications to prevent complications. She outlined steps for managing blood pressure, including regular monitoring, lifestyle changes, and medication adherence, and highlighted the significant health risks associated with uncontrolled hypertension and diabetes.

Hypertension Management Lifestyle Strategies

Dr. Phyllis discussed the importance of managing hypertension through lifestyle modifications and medication compliance. She outlined five core lifestyle pillars: diet (following the DASH diet), exercise (30 minutes daily, 5 days a week with additional strengthening exercises), weight control, substance limitation, and stress management. Dr. Phyllis emphasized the DASH diet's focus on whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins, while limiting salt and alcohol consumption. She also stressed the importance of managing stress through

mindfulness and proper sleep habits, noting that much of what people perceive as stress is a state of mind that can be controlled.

Diabetes Types and Risk Factors

Dr. Phyllis explained the differences between type 1 and type 2 diabetes, noting that type 1 typically occurs in children and requires insulin treatment, while type 2 can often be managed with medication and lifestyle changes initially. She outlined normal blood sugar ranges using fasting glucose and A1C measurements, emphasizing that levels above specific thresholds indicate prediabetes or diabetes. Dr. Phyllis highlighted key risk factors for type 2 diabetes in Ghana, including low physical activity, obesity, and certain dietary patterns, explaining how insulin resistance develops due to excess fat in organs and lack of physical activity.

Diabetes Management and Complications

Dr. Phyllis discussed the serious complications of diabetes, emphasizing the importance of controlling blood sugar levels through a 1% A1C reduction which can significantly reduce mortality and complications. She outlined five main components of diabetes management: nutritional management, exercise, monitoring, and education. Dr. Phyllis provided specific dietary recommendations including 12 foods that lower diabetes risk such as fatty fish, leafy greens, nuts, and garlic, while explaining proper portion sizes for various foods including meat, rice, and vegetables.

Diabetes and Hypertension Management Presentation

Dr. Phyllis Tawiah delivered an educational presentation on diabetes and hypertension management, covering topics such as fasting benefits, exercise recommendations, medication adherence, and dietary adjustments. She emphasized the importance of regular monitoring, particularly using A1C tests every three months, and recommended specific lifestyle changes including weight management, proper nutrition, and regular exercise. During the Q&A session, participants asked about various health concerns including chia seeds for fat reduction, blood pressure monitoring, neuropathy treatment, and plantain consumption for prediabetes. Dr. Phyllis Tawiah provided detailed responses to these questions, including recommendations for wearable health devices and advice on managing specific symptoms.