



It gives me great pleasure to introduce this supplement edition of *South African Family Practice*. This issue will be devoted to the presentations from the South African Hypertension Society Congress refresher day. The theme of this day will primarily

be directed at "What the hypertension practitioner needs to know." In other words, the core knowledge required by practitioners to treat hypertension and associated cardiovascular and renal disease, mainly at the primary care level. This is essential reading for all hypertension practitioners.

The new South African hypertension guideline was published in the January edition of the *South African Medical Journal*, and Prof Seedat presents an abridged version of this guideline, outlining methods of blood pressure (BP) measurement, cardiovascular risk stratification, first-line and combination therapy, compelling indications and treatment of severe hypertension.

Prof Eoin O'Brien from Dublin discusses the "Why, how, when, and where of BP measurement." It is well known that the use of office BP for the diagnosis and assessment of control of hypertension is fraught with problems, and the NICE guidelines have recommended the use of ambulatory BP in all new hypertensive patients. He discusses all the critically important issues related to ambulatory BP and self-BP measurement, and this is essential reading.

Microalbuminuria, renal function and left ventricular hypertrophy are important markers of target-organ

damage and cardiovascular risk that should be assessed in all hypertensive patients. Professors Veriava and Norton discuss these parameters and the implications for treatment.

Lifestyle changes are a critical component of the treatment of a hypertensive patient, both in reducing cardiovascular risk and blood pressure. Dr Vash Mungal-Singh provides a comprehensive overview of lifestyle changes that should be implemented in all patients.

Type 2 diabetes is a very important co-morbid condition associated with hypertension, and Prof Willie Mollentze provides a comprehensive overview of the key issues in the assessment and treatment of the type 2 diabetic.

Increasingly, hypertension practitioners are faced with the problem of hypertension in the young. There is an urgent need to develop cost-effective strategies related to assessment, investigation and treatment. In my article, I attempt to provide a practical approach to this growing problem.

Drug interactions and drug side-effects are important and often neglected problems associated with the management of hypertension, and can have serious consequences. Prof Lionel Opie and Dr Yvonne Trinder provide excellent and clinically relevant insights into these two issues.

Overall, I believe these articles will provide the hypertension practitioner with important information that can be translated into their daily practice and result in improved patient care.

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