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Active health awareness leads to early detection of various diseases. Home blood pressure monitoring is an extremely useful and effective tool.

The scope of our study now includes not only the relationship between blood pressure and diseases but also the relationship between blood pressure and stress.

Since 1986, our laboratory has been studying the relationship between home blood pressure and diseases in Ohasama-machi, Iwate Prefecture. To date, our study has revealed that the home blood pressure values predict more accurately future adverse events than office blood pressure values, that “ambulatory blood pressure measurement”, in which blood pressure is measured every 30 minutes for 24 hours, can also accurately and appropriately predict future diseases, and even that those with small decreases in blood pressure during sleep are prone to diseases. In recent years, we have also been studying how lifestyle habits such as diet and exercise relate to disease and how mental health conditions including stress and depression are associated with diseases.



We have been able to continue the study for so long because of the feedback provided to the participants.

We have been working on the Ohasama Study to increase residents' motivation for good health by considering their viewpoint. Therefore, while the study is valuable research for us, it is a health checkup for the residents. At the beginning of the study, the examination was limited only to home blood pressure values, but it has expanded to include examination items for many other fields such as the head MRI scan, diabetes screening and dementia testing. For this reason, the health awareness level of town residents is very high. Even people whose blood pressure is not very high measure their blood pressure at home daily and they use these values as a health indicator.

We have also seen a noticeable decrease in the number of cancer deaths.

When I examined in detail how the Ohasama Study influenced the health awareness of residents, I found that the growth of health care costs was slowed and the total number of fatalities was reduced. This indicates that the residents' healthy life span was extended. Looking at the causes of death, deaths from cerebrovascular diseases remained unchanged, but deaths from cancer were apparently reduced.

I think that the early detection and early treatment of cancer can be attributed to changes in awareness of health as a result of home blood pressure monitoring and the like. This suggests that home blood pressure monitoring is an extremely valuable medical tool.

We hope to continue positively patient education on home blood pressure monitoring.

The data obtained from home blood pressure monitoring serves as very significant health information. According to one survey, 75% of hypertensive patients owned a home-use blood pressure monitor, but only 45% of these patients showed the data recorded on these units to their physicians.

In order to ensure effective use of the valuable data provided by home blood pressure monitors, practicing internists should promote awareness of the importance of home blood pressure monitoring among their patients.