

MANAGING HYPERTENSION IN PASTORAL MINISTRY

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## ABSTRACT

Ministry is full of challenges, which are both inward and outward. The Inward manifests as a result of the Pastor being a man, husband if married, father with children. Outward, since he is a churchman, minister, and an important figure in the society. In these two aspects, he is expected to be responsible, relevant, and fulfilled. These demands may build up stress in the Pastor's life and may lead to being plagued by hypertension which when left untreated may result into atherosclerosis, heart attack, stroke, enlarged heart, kidney damage, and finally death.

Hypertension is common in Pastoral ministry. This research shows that some pastoral activities could lead to being hypertensive. In addition to this are improper diet, poor salary, education, anxiety and lack of regular exercise. Other risk factors for hypertension include obesity, salt ingestion, excess alcohol intake, smoking, age, sex, race, and inactive lifestyle. It is obvious that some Pastors are suffering from hypertension, which is sometimes termed silent killer.

Although the researchers are working on how it could be cure but the findings so far center on its management and this could raise the hope of Pastors who are hypertensive. Such management includes regular blood pressure checking, engaging in brisk exercise 4 or 5 times a week, lower salt ingestion, monitoring the body weight, eating of plenty vegetables, and daily intake of fruits. Lastly Pastors body is termed the temple of the Holy Spirit and should therefore be treated so (I Cor. 6:19).

day assignments. Activities can lead to stress and “Just as too much rain can be devastating, so also too much stress can overwhelm our resources” (Rediger 19). Stress triggers biochemical process that releases adrenaline, a chemical substance that raises blood pressure.

Emotions, that is, the expressed feelings, such as anger and laughter are factors that further contribute to the state of well being of individual. Reduction of period of anger and lengthening laughter give freshness and renewal of body system (Olayiwola 2008). In addition to this, vegetables play more tricks since it gives an anti-oxidant and helps to flush away excess salt from the system and it is rightly noted that several chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease and hypertension are less found with the vegetarians (Schneiderman 265).

## Conclusion

Hypertension, by no means, continues to lynch its fists of death silently on the populace from generation to generation. Unfortunately effective cure has not been found for the increased blood pressure which is due to advanced disease of the artery although the patient’s condition may be rendered comfortable (Crisp 291). This comfortability is ensured for certain periods in lifetime and it is majorly through lifestyle modifications and medications (291).

Physical well being is needed for ministerial fulfillment and it is discovered according to Yessick that “The changes toward physical well being can provide short term and long term benefits” (61). These benefits include increased longevity, reduced risk of heart attack, reduced risk of stroke, reduced risk of high blood pressure, reduced risk of kidney failure, improved muscle strength, improved system function, improve-sense of well being, better weight control and less depression (62).

Since every Pastor desires fulfillment there is a need to embrace a state of well being. Yessick includes a reduced risk of high blood pressure as one of the benefits this therefore, suggests a way of coping with and managing of hypertension.

Negative feelings such as tension, stress, anxiety, discouragement, exhaustion, and uptightness are associated with burn out (Rediger 22). These emotional states could lead to an increased blood pressure if they are not properly managed. These feelings when brought under control will put an end to the secretion of certain chemicals from the body system which cause vasoconstriction that lead to increased blood pressure. Pastoral work is highly demanding. It demands for system of time and self. This, according to Yessick is termed 'Pastoral support system' (100). This system comprises of self nurture which "honours our individual responsibility to God for stewardship of ourselves" (100). This means Clergy's calling is a responsibility to God and giving of oneself to others. It involves given of total self – body mind and spirit. The second part of this support system is the 'pastor's intimate relationship'. This comprises "marriage, family, peers, and close friends". These are some of the many duties one cannot runaway from because they are part of Pastoral responsibilities. The third aspect of the system according to Yessick is 'Spiritual support and discipline system'. This demands high level of discipline in reading, listening, discussing, watching, caring and traveling (102). All these may usher in the negative feelings.

As good as the pastoral support system is, the wisdom of scripture cannot be neglected God has put in place effectiveness in the ministry and the ways of attainment of such effectiveness.

## Pastoral Care Response

A Pastoral care approach may help Pastors to enjoy good health. Good health is God's will for the Pastors and it is advisable to always consider health as one of the major priorities in life. Sound health brings sound and lasting ministry. God further wishes Pastor's body to be blameless (I Thessalonians 5:23). Pastors should therefore, get accustomed to:

- (1). Hospital ministry that will give clinical knowledge to the Pastors about hypertension.
- (2). Teachings on wellness that take into account how Pastors should live, what they eat and how stressful they are.
- (3). Pastoral education should teach the Pastors to know their limitations in order to avoid unnecessary stress.
- (4). The knowledge of clinical Pastoral education for Pastors is good because it may expose them to degenerative diseases, stress, and burnout.

Jesus' mode of living and ministry should be a pacesetter for the Pastors. His foot steps lead to life of fulfillment. The Holy Bible puts it that "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men". (Luke 2:52). This verse connotes all-round perfection. Jesus ministry was a balanced one and to this verse Yessick gives his comment that wisdom connotes intellectual growth; Stature, connotes physical growth; favour with God, connotes spiritually growth; and favour with men, connotes social growth. These four are important to live a balanced Pastoral life and to have the ability in carrying successfully an individual through all the challenges of ministry (27). Furthermore, when a saved soul dwells in a sound body, it will give room for an individual to serve God as best as he can for as long as the ability affords without being hindered by any ailment such as anxiety, stress,

depression, heart problems, hypertension and many other health issues that hinders the effectiveness of ministry (25).

Physically, Jesus has a perfect body with properly functioning system. His body was not neglected at the detriments of his spirituality nor his intellectuality. His social responsibility did not bring retardation of his stature. Pastors therefore have the privileges of being healthy in the ministry by looking into Jesus the master pacesetter. The individuals that are plagued, with hypertension as a result of negligence of their body have the chance of coping and managing it if all the necessary measures are put in place since many things that plague our bodies can be influenced dramatically by what we engaged in (25).

Balance support is necessary for healthy and effective ministry. Emotional, academic, spiritual and professional growths are needed supports but above all physical fitness occurs when we treat our bodies like God's temple. These are needed for effective and seasoned administration in performing both spiritual and physical matters. Finally, Pastors need to be focused on the Chief Shepherd of the Church, Jesus Christ, by "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..." (Hebrews 12:2). This should be done in the areas of social, physical, emotional, intellect and spiritual. This allows Pastors to be divinely led in order to achieve the purpose of administering God's work and people aright.

## Recommendations

The following are the recommendations from the field of study by the researcher to Pastors, Theological Schools, Churches, .Associations, Pastors Conference and Convention since Pastors are actively involved in these organogram.

