

Transcript of Media-Hypertension control lag under new blood pressure guidelines

OSF cardiologist responds to results of new study during National Heart Month

Dr. Jason Trager, DO, cardiologist at OSF HealthCare in Bloomington, Illinois

Under updated guidelines, the long-standing 140/90 mm Hg is now considered stage 2 hypertension, and a blood pressure of 130/80 mm Hg is considered stage 1.

"Which is a fairly low goal yet, when you compare 13/80 to the 140/90 and you treat these people, it resulted in about 15% risk reduction in all-cause mortality. So again, there's good data to back it up." (:22)

Dr. Trager says the reasons blood pressure isn't under control for so many people are complex and often overlapping.

"Well, it's a little bit difficult to tell," according to Dr. Trager. "And sometimes it could be access to the care where the patients aren't getting in to see their primary care docs and doing the primary care prevention type of stuff. Sometimes it could be related to the cost of the medications that are required, or some people just have high blood pressure, but they don't know it." (:22)

Smoking cessation, he emphasizes, could have the single greatest impact.

"Quitting smoking decreases your risk of having heart attack and strokes by 50%. I mean, it's almost better than any medication that I can give you, it's just, it's just not to smoke." Dr. Trager continues, "The other thing we see a lot is sleep apnea and treatment of the sleep apnea – that can really reduce someone's blood pressure significantly too." (:22)

lifestyle changes that can significantly reduce blood pressure.

"If someone decreases their salt intake, and there's this DASH diet, we can see about a 10 point blood pressure reduction," Dr. Trager says. "If someone starts exercising, we all see about a five point reduction in blood pressure. If someone ends up losing, you know, just 10 pounds, you would also see about a five to 10 point blood pressure reduction." (:26)

Trager recommends taking a blood pressure reading once a week at home

"With these newer guidelines, about one in five people will be controlled," he said. "So, in other words, come in, bring in your blood pressure cuff, see your primary (care provider), or see your cardiologist, because you will probably need to do some tweaking of the medications now." (:17)

