

'Less is more' when it comes to treating high blood pressure

March 19 2009

A newly published study found patients actually have more control of their high blood pressure (hypertension) when treated with less medication. The study led by Dr. Ross D. Feldman, a clinical scientist with the Robarts Research Institute at The University of Western Ontario recommends a simplified and more effective method of treating hypertension using low doses of single pill combinations, rather than multiple pills. The "Simplified Treatment Intervention to Control Hypertension" (STITCH) study is in the April edition of the journal *Hypertension*.

STITCH involved 2,104 patients with high [blood pressure](#) at 45 family practices in southwestern Ontario, Canada. Researchers wanted to see if there are simpler ways to help patients (and their doctors) reduce their blood pressure to goal levels than by following national guidelines which can be complicated. Feldman's study suggests that the majority of recently-diagnosed patients might better be served starting with a half tablet of a single pill [combination drug](#) (e.g. an ACE-inhibitor/diuretic or Angiotensin [receptor blocker](#)/diuretic combination) than the regular starting dose of a single drug.

"The nature of [hypertension](#) management has changed. It's much more aggressive, and complex, leading to hundreds of recommendations on how to manage [high blood pressure](#)," says Feldman, the R.W. Gunton Professor of Therapeutics at Western. "This should be a call to hypertensive patients to go to their family physicians to be prescribed these single pill combinations. It makes both the patients' and doctors'

lives easier."

The proper diagnosis and treatment of high blood pressure can cut your risk of stroke by up to 40% and heart attack by up to 25%.

Source: University of Western Ontario

Citation: 'Less is more' when it comes to treating high blood pressure (2009, March 19) retrieved 2 February 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-03-high-blood-pressure.html>

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