

***High blood pressure
in Lambeth and
Southwark
- a community
perspective***

*Research findings from
2005 MORI inquiry*

Modernisation Initiative

kidney disease

Improving local healthcare



Introduction

The Modernisation Initiative is a three year programme, funded by the Guy's and St Thomas' Charity, to significantly improve health and health care in Lambeth and Southwark. The project involves professionals from the local NHS and partner organisations working with local people and patients to redesign services so they better meet people's health and health care needs. The programme is focusing on three key areas: kidney disease, sexual health and stroke services.

Lambeth and Southwark have a significantly higher number of people living with kidney disease compared to the national average. A major cause of kidney disease and end-stage renal failure is high blood pressure (HBP), particularly if it remains undiagnosed or inadequately treated. HBP is common in all population groups but especially in the Caribbean and South Asian population.

An important element of the kidney disease programme involves raising awareness about HBP and reducing the risk of HBP amongst the general public. Many people have HBP which is undiagnosed, and may only access the health service when consequent health problems such as kidney disease appear. The long term effects of HBP could be reduced if people with the condition are diagnosed early and receive effective treatment.

In June 2005, the Modernisation Initiative commissioned MORI to conduct a baseline survey of people's knowledge and understanding of HBP in Lambeth and Southwark. The survey also explored the effectiveness of various strategies for raising awareness and examined ways of promoting healthy lifestyle choices in the local community.

Methodology

MORI and the Modernisation Initiative worked together to design a questionnaire. Once developed, it was tested with local residents to ensure that it was easily understood and interesting for people to complete.

The main fieldwork stage consisted of 2,055 10-minute face-to-face interviews with residents aged 18 and over, conducted in Lambeth and Southwark between 11 July and 28 August 2005. MORI drew up quotas of respondents according to age, gender, ethnicity, and working status, derived from the 2001 census. This ensured that the interviews were representative of the population of the two boroughs.

Headline Findings

One in ten (11%) residents in Lambeth and Southwark spontaneously mention High Blood Pressure (HBP) as a health concern. Of those who do not already have the condition, the proportion falls to only one in twenty (5%) residents.

Over half of the residents (53%) do not feel at risk of developing HBP over the next few years. One in three (33%) admit to being concerned about the condition. Residents whose immediate family members do not have HBP are even less likely to feel at any risk (17%). The chance of having family members with HBP appears to influence awareness of HBP but it does not *automatically* mean people think they themselves are at risk.

One in six residents say they have HBP, but only one in eight mention that they are currently on treatment for HBP. The difference may reflect some misunderstandings about people's perception of their blood pressure medication as treatment for other conditions, for instance to prevent a stroke, as well as not receiving any treatment.

Not everyone understands that if you develop HBP, it can be controlled but not fully cured. One in three residents (33%) believe that HBP can be cured, with one in four (27%) of those who have HBP, sharing this misconception.

Two in five people (42%) say that they would be more likely to have a blood pressure check *if they knew their chance of developing the condition*. As with other areas of public health, the difficulty is persuading people it is 'about me' rather than 'about them'.

In general, when people take steps to try and reduce their risk of developing HBP, there are differences between the actions taken by men and women. Men prefer exercise to reduce the risk (23% citing this as opposed to 19% of women). On the other hand, women were the more likely to choose a healthier diet (13% against 9% of men).

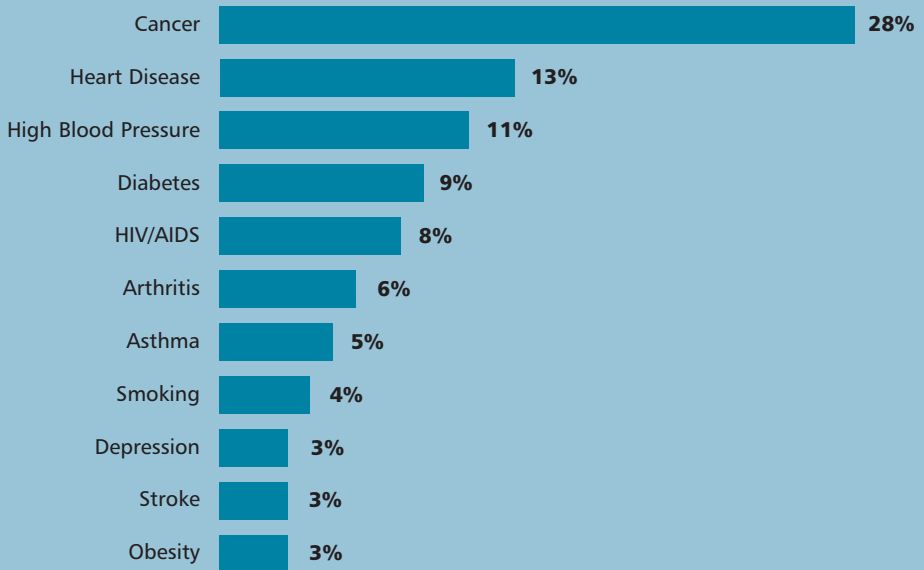
Just under one in ten (9%) residents of Lambeth and Southwark have never had a blood pressure check. Men are twice as likely (12%) as women (6%) not to have had their blood pressure measured.

Awareness and Experience

HBP is one of the more common health concerns in the two boroughs, with about one in ten (11%) people mentioning it overall.

Health concerns in Lambeth and Southwark

Which two or three general health problems or illnesses, if any, most concern you? (unprompted)



Base: all respondents (2,055)

Source: MORI

Only 1% of residents stated that kidney disease is a health issue that concerns them.



Older residents are more likely to be concerned by HBP than younger residents. Of those aged 45 or older, one in five (19%) mentions it as a concern compared to only one in fifteen (7%) of those aged between 18 and 45. Members of the Caribbean community (20%) are twice as likely to mention it than white residents (9%).

“One in six local residents say they have high blood pressure, this may mean Lambeth and Southwark residents are 33% more likely to have high blood pressure than the national average” **Dr. Jamie Ferguson, Consultant in Public Health Medicine.**

When we looked at the various communities living in Lambeth and Southwark we found that there were more Caribbean people with HBP (23%) than any other ethnic group.

Of all the residents interviewed, one in eight (13%) say that they are currently being treated for HBP. One in five residents (22%) who say they have HBP are not currently on any treatment for their condition. There might be a number of different reasons why people may say this; some might not be taking any medication, but others might believe they take their medication to treat another complaint such as stroke.

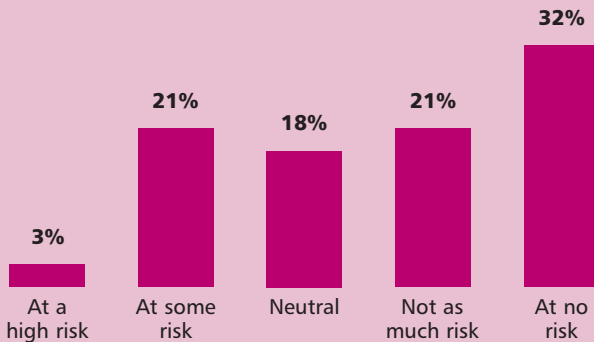
“If this is a true picture then there could be 15,000 people in Lambeth and Southwark who are known to have high blood pressure but who are not on treatment, this could put them at much greater risk of heart disease, stroke and kidney failure” **Dr. John Balazs, local GP.**

People's perception of risk

Residents who said they do not have HBP were asked whether they feel that they are at risk of developing the condition. About one in four (23%) of these people feel at least at some risk of developing HBP - and only about one in forty (3%) think they are at high risk of developing it.

Perception of Risk

To what extent do you consider yourself being at risk of developing high blood pressure over the next few years?



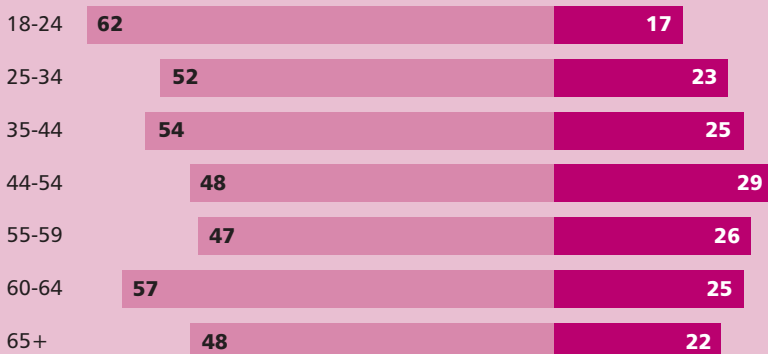
Base: all who do not have high blood pressure (1,731)

Source: MORI

The younger people are, the less they feel at risk from HBP. On the other hand, risk perception peaks at 45-54 and then tails off slightly.

Risk by Age

To what extent do you consider yourself being at risk of developing high blood pressure over the next few years?



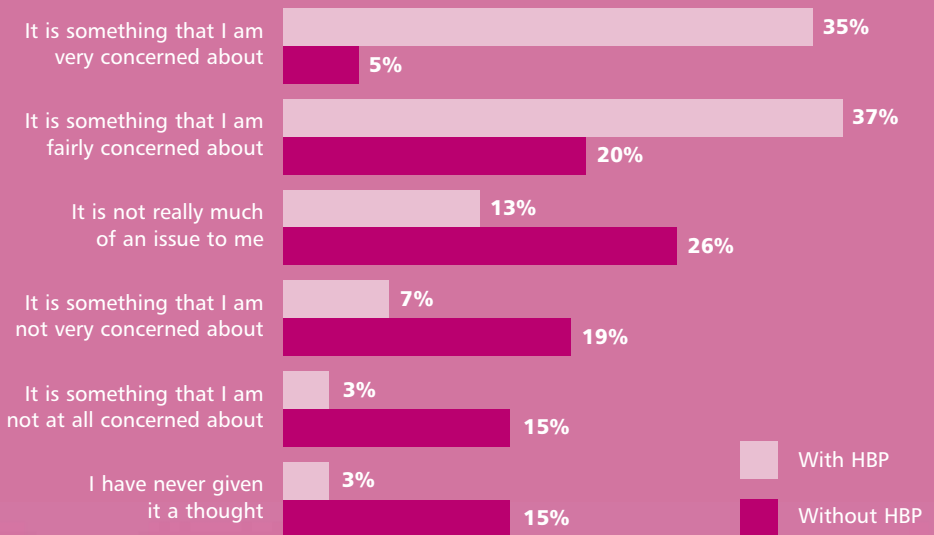
Base: all who do not have high blood pressure (1,731)

Source: MORI

Residents of Lambeth and Southwark who do have HBP are, unsurprisingly, much more concerned about the condition than those who do not have it.

Concerns about HBP

Which of the following statements comes closest to your views towards high blood pressure?



Base: all respondents (2,055)

Source: MORI

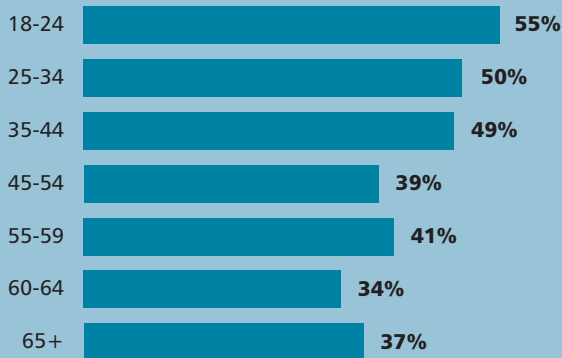
"I was not concerned about high blood pressure until I was diagnosed with high blood pressure and kidney disease. Our community needs to be more aware and take regular blood pressure checks." **Malcolm Adams, local patient living with kidney disease**

Actions taken to reduce the risk of developing high blood pressure

“It is alarming that only half of the boroughs’ residents have taken action to reduce their risk of developing high blood pressure in the last year” **Ros Band**, Health Development Manager

Those who have done nothing - by age

Thinking about yourself and your family, what if anything have you and/or your family done to reduce your risk of developing high blood pressure in the last year?



Base: all respondents who have done nothing (949)

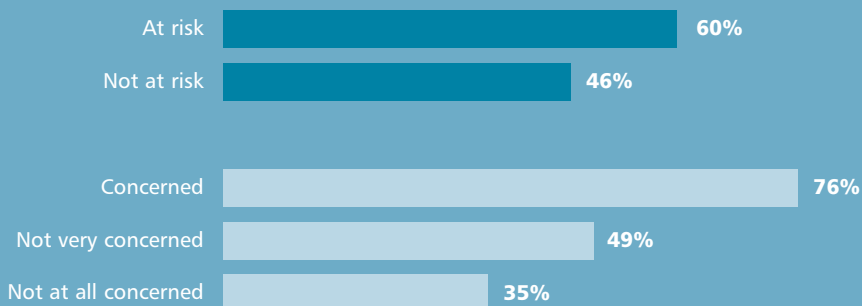
Source: MORI

Younger people are less likely to have made any positive lifestyle changes to help avoid HBP

Where people have made a change, exercise is more popular among men (23%) than women (19%). On the other hand, dietary changes are more popular with women (13%) than men (9%). White residents are more likely to say they have begun to take more exercise (23%) and made dietary changes (12%) than residents from the boroughs’ Black and Asian communities (17% and 9% respectively).

Those who have done nothing - by 'level of concern' and 'risk'

Thinking about you and your family, what if anything have you and/or your family done to reduce your risk of developing high blood pressure in the last year?



Base: All respondents who have taken action

Source: MORI

Feeling concerned about HBP is clearly something that motivates people to make a lifestyle change. On the other hand, one in seven (14%) residents who already have HBP says they have not taken any steps to reduce risk of developing HBP in the last year.



What people know about the causes and effects of high blood pressure

Residents of Lambeth and Southwark are most likely to say that 'tension and stress' cause HBP (46%). Just over a third of residents (35%) say 'diet' and about one in five (22%) say smoking. Some people think that other lifestyle issues can cause the condition, such as too little exercise (22%), obesity (19%) and salt (17%).

The main symptoms people spontaneously associated with HBP are:

Giddiness / dizziness (26%)

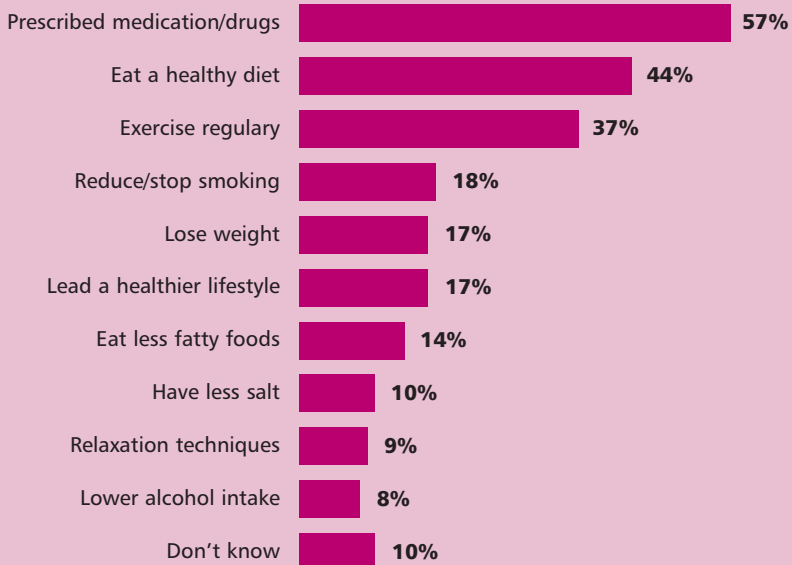
Headache (25%)

Tiredness (24%)

Generally, the survey shows that people in Lambeth and Southwark have a generally good knowledge about how HBP can be treated. More than half (57%) say that medication can be used to treat the condition and nearly half (44%) mention eating a healthy diet.

Treatment of HBP

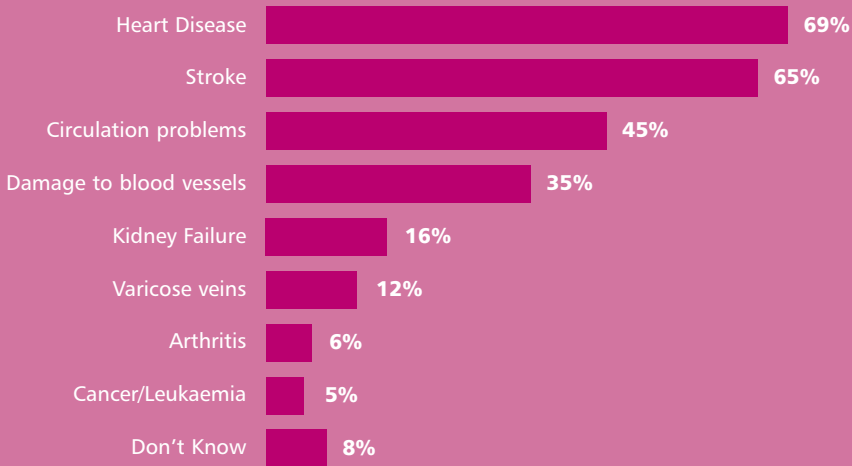
How can high blood pressure be treated?



Generally, knowledge of the effects of HBP was reasonably well understood by the local community.

Disease caused by HBP

Looking at this list which disease do you think can be caused by high blood pressure?



Base: all respondents (2,055)

Source: MORI

While over half (54%) of the residents correctly think that HBP can be controlled, cured to some extent or not fully cured, it is worrying that so many people (33%) think that HBP can be fully cured as this may stop people either taking treatment or making lifestyle changes that could help them never to get HBP in the first place.

“It is worrying that the research shows that up to 33% of local people think it is possible to cure high blood pressure” Dr. Penny Ackland, Local GP

Blood Pressure Checks

Nine out of ten residents of Lambeth and Southwark (90%) have had a blood pressure check at some point. Three in five (59%) of these were within the last six months.

One in five (22%) residents aged 18 to 24 have never had a check. Only 6% of women have not had a check compared to 12% of men. This probably reflects the fact that many women have more regular contact with their GP.

“We need to find out why 13% of the Black and Asian community have never had their blood pressure checked in comparison to 6% of the white community”.
Dr. Raj Mitra, local GP

Of all those checked, two in three (68%) had their most recent check in their GP's surgery.



Encouraging people to check their blood pressure

The main ways of encouraging people to have their blood pressure checked are:

- Their knowing if they are at risk of developing HBP (42%)
- Their knowing what illnesses HBP can cause (43%)

People who are not at all concerned about HBP are more likely to have a check if they know how much at risk they are of developing it in the future (41%) than knowing what illnesses can be caused by having HBP (34%).

Most people (59%) think it would be easiest to have their blood pressure checked in the waiting room of their GP's surgery. People under the age of 45 are more likely to want checks outside of normal healthcare settings, such as at work or in the gym.



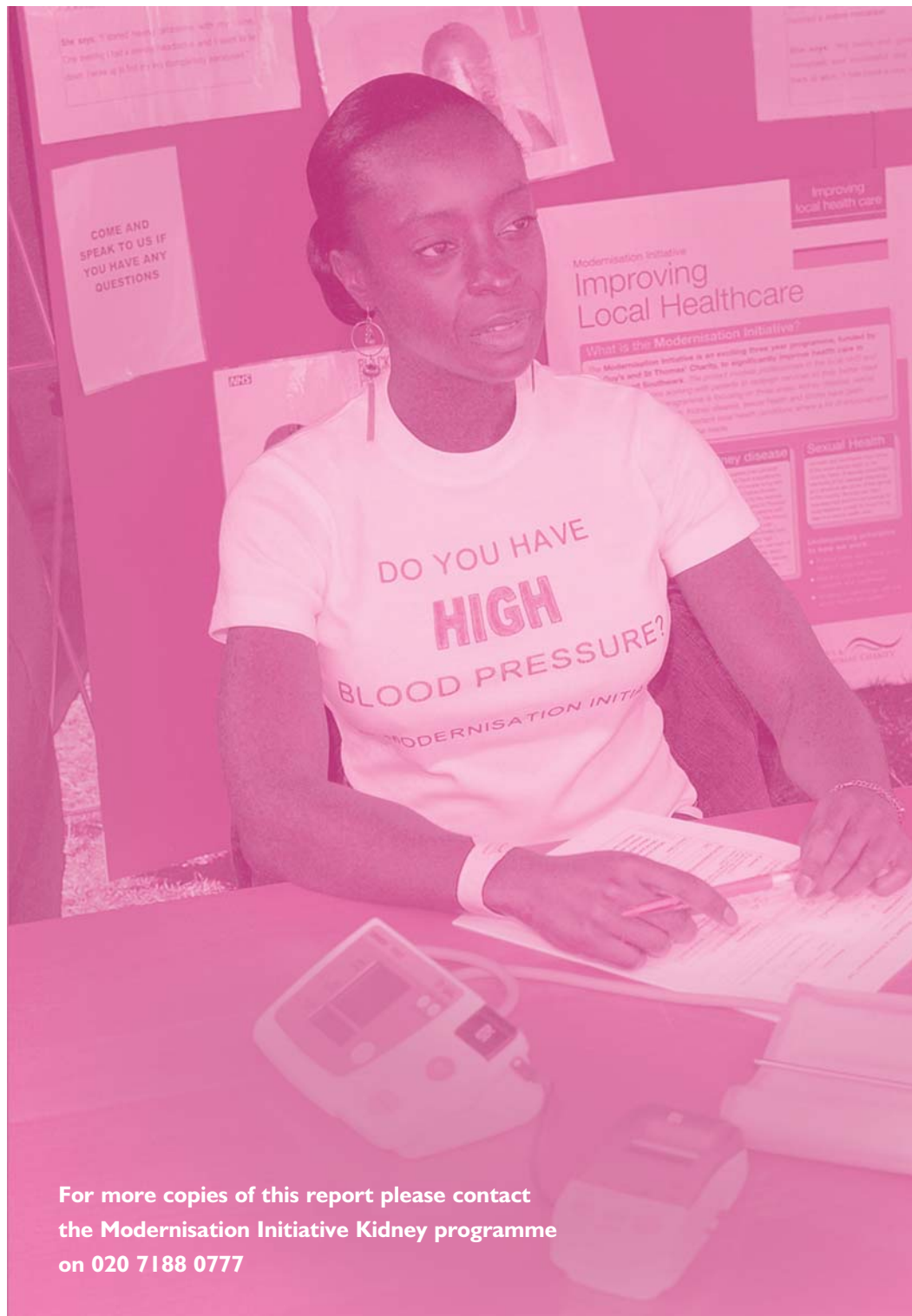
Summary

- It appears that HBP is more common in Lambeth and Southwark compared to the rest of the country.
- Of those who say they have HBP a substantial number are not being treated
- Men are less likely to have had their blood pressure checked than women
- A smaller number of black and asian residents have had their blood pressure checked in comparison to their white counterparts
- Preventing HBP will reduce the chances of someone developing a long term illness or even an early death.

The next steps:

In light of these results, the Modernisation Initiative is commissioning qualitative research. The aim is to investigate the most effective methods and messages to raise awareness of HBP in our local population. This research will be published early 2006.





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the Modernisation Initiative Kidney programme
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