

Cardiovascular Disease Risk Factors

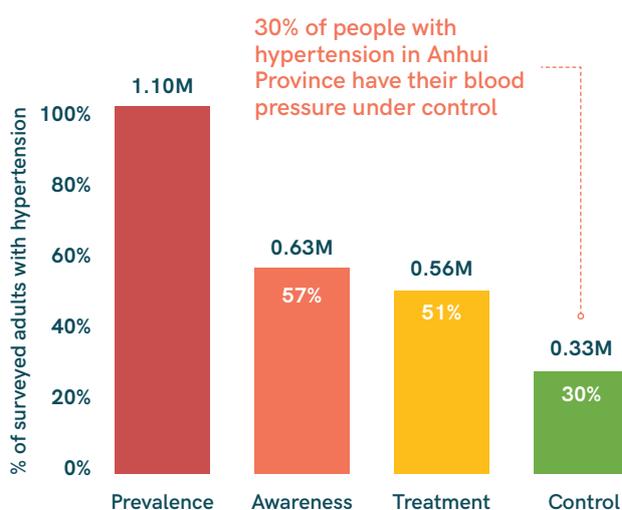
Hypertension and salt intake survey results (2019)

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death globally and in China. One of the major risk factors for cardiovascular disease—high blood pressure, or hypertension—is responsible for more than 10 million deaths each year globally, and over 2.5 million deaths in 2017 in China.¹ In China, 23% of adults have hypertension. Among those with hypertension, only 15% have it under control.² High salt intake is a major cause of hypertension, especially in China, where average salt intake is 10.5 grams per day, more than twice the daily amount the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends (5 grams per day).³ In 2017, over 1.6 million people in China died from CVDs because of excessive sodium intake.

In 2017, Anhui Health Commission signed a memorandum of cooperation with Resolve to Save Lives, an initiative of Vital Strategies, to jointly conduct salt reduction and hypertension prevention projects in Anhui Province. In 2019, a baseline survey on blood pressure and sodium intake was conducted in 10 counties in Anhui Province, with funding from Resolve to Save Lives, an initiative of Vital Strategies, and technical support from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The survey results provide baseline information for evaluating the two projects.

Hypertension

In the 10 surveyed counties, 20% of adults aged 18 – 69 years had hypertension. Prevalence was higher in men than in women (23% v. 16%). Average systolic blood pressure (SBP) was 120.7 mmHg, and the average diastolic blood pressure (DBP) was 73.7 mmHg. The survey identified a gap in diagnosis and treatment. Among people with hypertension, 57% had been diagnosed. While the majority of people diagnosed are receiving treatment, only about half of those on treatment have their blood pressure under control.



1. Zhou, M., Wang, H., Zeng, X., Yin, P., Zhu, J., Chen, W., Liu, J., et al. (2019). Mortality, morbidity, and risk factors in China and its provinces, 1990–2017: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017. *The Lancet*, 394(10204), 1145–1158.

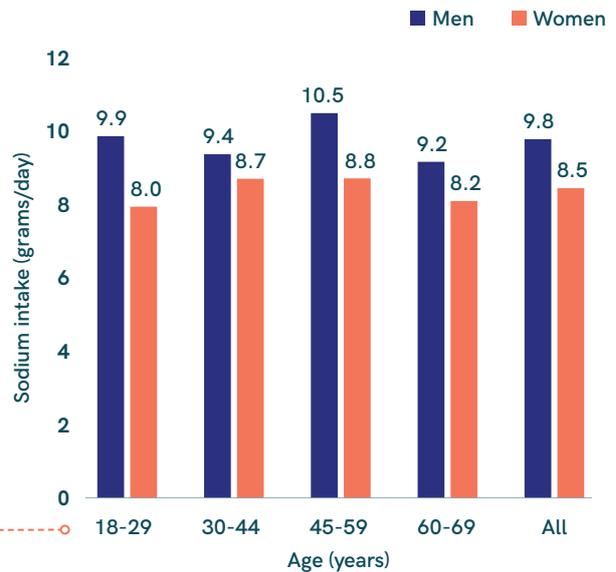
2. Wang, Z., Chen, Z., Zhang, L., Wang, X., Hao, G., Zhang, Z., Wang, J., et al. (2018). Status of hypertension in China: results from the China hypertension survey, 2012–2015. *Circulation*, 137(22), 2344–2356.

3. National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China. (2016). Report on Chinese Residents' Chronic Diseases and Nutrition 2015. Beijing: People's Medical Publishing House.

Salt intake

In surveyed counties, the average salt intake of residents aged 18-69 is 9.1 g/day (measured using 24-hour urine sodium excretion; sodium excretion 155.4 mmol/24 hour).

Salt intake is greater in men than women but does not vary consistently by age



Salt intake-related knowledge, attitudes and practices

Most participants were aware of some negative health impacts of salt, with 85% believing “salty seasoning/sauce was not beneficial for health”. However, participants were less likely to have information related to reducing salt intake — only 20% were aware of the daily limit recommended by the Chinese government (6 grams per day, since reduced to 5 grams in line with WHO recommendations).

65% of participants believed that reducing salt in their diet was very important (69% women v.

61% of men) and 80% believed that the salt levels in foods sold should be reduced. Overall 60% reported taking some action to reduce salt. Some specific actions were common, with 60% paying attention to the labeled sodium content when purchasing food. Others were less common: 29% have heard of low-sodium salt, among whom less than half had used it; 17% have used a salt spoon to help individuals measure and restrict salt while cooking. Primary reasons that participants did not reduce salt intake are shown in the figure below.

