

2013

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**PILL BURDEN AS A LIMITING FACTOR
TO PATIENT COMPLIANCE AND SUCCESSFUL
TREATMENT OF HYPERTENSION
AT THIKA LEVEL FIVE HOSPITAL.**

**A research project submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor in Pharmacy
of Mount Kenya University.**

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2013

ABSTRACT

Hypertension is defined as an average systolic blood pressure 140 mm Hg or greater, diastolic blood pressure 90 mm Hg or greater (Kearney *et al.*, 2005). Hypertension is one of the most important cardiovascular risk factor but its control is still a challenge all around the world. Control of blood pressure can reduce cardiovascular morbidity and mortality, so the compliance to antihypertensive drugs plays an important role for the control of hypertension. Most of the hypertensive patients suffer from other cardiovascular, renal, cerebrovascular or ocular diseases; therefore, they are prescribed many medications that lead to pill burden. The research study investigated on pill burden as a major limiting factor to patient compliance and successful treatment with antihypertensive therapy among patients who attended Thika Level Five hospital. The general objective was to determine the total number of prescribed medications to the hypertensive patients at Thika Level Five hospital. The study was a descriptive cross-sectional design which was conducted at Thika Level Five Hospital. The study population constituted hypertensive patients who were under antihypertensive treatment and attended the hypertensive clinic. A total of 82 patients were included in the study; the study used simple random sampling. In this study, data was collected using structured questionnaires and also from medical records of hypertensive patients. Data was analyzed using Microsoft word and presented using tables and graphs. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents namely 35(42.68%) were prescribed three antihypertensive drugs followed by 28 (34.15%) prescribed two drugs, 17(20.73%) prescribed four drugs and 2 (2.44%) prescribed five drugs. In this study, majority of the respondents 23(28.05%) had been prescribed a total of four drugs, 21 (25.61%) five drugs, 18 (21.95%) three drugs, 10(12.20%) two drugs, 7(8.54%) six drugs, 2(2.44%) seven drugs, 1(1.22%) eight drugs. The study revealed that despite effective treatment of hypertension, (68.29%) participants had uncontrolled hypertension while the control of blood pressure was low (31.71%) among the study participants. The findings revealed that patients prescribed few drugs had a greater percent of controlled blood pressure as compared to those prescribed many drugs. Therefore, pill burden was a major limiting factor to patient compliance and successful treatment of hypertension. In order for the patients to be comply with antihypertensive therapy; Doctors need to prescribe few drugs or combination fixed dose regimen, they should give health education to patients to every clinic visit on the importance of complying with medication and patients should be educated that antihypertensive drugs is for life use.