

New hypertension study uses text messaging to keep patients on track

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The Text My Meds study will see if a daily text reminder helps hypertension patients stay on track with their medications. (Stock photo)

The COVID-19 pandemic had a dramatic impact on health issues such as hypertension, but the global health crisis also led to major improvements in how to mitigate chronic conditions including high blood pressure. A new clinical trial conducted by The Healthy Heart Community Prevention Project (HHCPP) and Tulane University School of Medicine (TUSOM) will examine if a daily text reminder about when to take medications can assist patients to be consistent in managing their high blood pressure.

“Taking medicines for a disease that has little or no symptoms, especially if relatively mild, is always difficult,” said Keith C. Ferdinand, MD, Gerald S. Berenson

Chair in Preventative Cardiology at Tulane University School of Medicine. “Getting that daily text message hopefully will encourage patients to adhere more closely to their medication schedules. If we improve adherence to modern medications, we should be able to decrease the burdens of heart attacks and strokes.”

Research shows blood pressure control worsened when the world shut down in the spring of 2020. Nearly half of American adults have high blood pressure according to the American Heart Association. Stay-at-home orders led to increased alcohol consumption, less sleep and worse eating habits all while appointments with doctors shifted online.

The pandemic also encouraged the use of new tools to monitor blood pressure, with at-home devices that physicians can track remotely.

“We can actually see a person’s blood pressure in the home setting,” said Ferdinand. “Using a validated blood pressure device and teaching patients how to take their blood pressures accurately, we can have more confidence that the patient is indeed adhering to medications, and hopefully demonstrate better control of blood pressure.”

The [Text My Meds study](#) is being funded by the Louisiana Clinical and Translational Science Center (LA CaTS) with support from the National Institutes of Health. Enrollment begins Monday, February 14. Contact Dr. Daphne Ferdinand at info@healthyheartcpp.org or 504-944-9879 for more information.