When to Refer a Hypertensive Patient for Secondary Care?
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Hypertension is the commonest chronic disease presenting to primary care doctors. Along the way of diagnosing, confirming and treating hypertension, situations arise when a hypertensive patient needs to be referred to secondary care.

The reasons for referral could be for a diagnostic or a management problem. Complications of hypertension, hypertensive emergencies are also situations when referral is necessary. Obviously pregnant women, children and adolescent with hypertension ought to be referred to secondary care.

The common and usual reasons for referral are uncontrolled hypertension and to exclude secondary causes. True resistant hypertension and white coat hypertension are the more common cause of resistant hypertension while the more common secondary causes include sleep apnea, renal parenchymal disease, primary aldosteronism and renal artery stenosis.

The skill is in knowing when to refer a hypertensive patient. Referrals often help in achieving better control of hypertension, avoid treatment in those with white coat hypertension and managing reversible secondary causes. All these go towards a better management of hypertension.

Notes