Objective: The objective of this study is to understand patients' health beliefs, knowledge and perception of cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk factors, in particular the modifiable risk factors, to help in the planning of CVD prevention programs.

Setting and Participants: 21 male and 25 female patients aged 21–84 years were randomly selected from a multi-ethnic primary care clinic. Subjects were assigned to two groups of similar size: with or without CVD. The groups were matched for sex, age and ethnicity. Three languages were used.

Methods: Mixed methods were used: a structured interview guide with both open and closed-ended questions and rank-ordering methods.

Results: The mean age of the subjects was 51 years. 45.6% were Malay, 37.0% Chinese and 17.4% Indian. The majority (65.2%) were degree holders and 34.8% finished secondary level education.

Physicians, printed and digital media were regarded as reliable sources of health information. Knowledge and perception of obesity and hypertension as CVD risk factors were inadequate. Only 4% believed that obesity, 7% that hypertension and 9% that hypercholesterolemia are important CVD risk factors and cause of myocardial infarction. Obesity was not placed great importance as a risk factor for diabetes mellitus either.

There was inadequate knowledge of dietary sources of cholesterol. Knowledge about complications of tobacco use and about smoking cessation techniques was insufficient. Forty-one percent of interviewees reported doing 4 h or more of moderate or strenuous exercise per week.

There was no statistically significant difference in answers to closed-ended questions between subjects with or without CVD and between subjects with different education level (p > 0.05).

Conclusion: Public policy should focus on providing the community with skills on how to choose credible health information from printed and digital media. Preventive programs should focus on improving the public's awareness of the significance of obesity and hypertension as CVD risk factors, improve awareness of physical activity, emphasize the wide range of complications of tobacco use, and improve knowledge of effective tobacco cessation programs.

Citation: Buehler R., Chia Y., Hoffman A., KNOWLEDGE, PERCEPTIONS OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE RISK FACTORS AMONG MULTI-ETHNIC URBAN MALAYSIANS, Journal of Hypertension, Vol 30, e-Supplement A,