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Evaluation of a pilot hypertension management programme for Guatemalan adults.

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Corazón Sano y Feliz is a hypertension management intervention developed to address deficiencies in the management of hypertensive patients in Guatemala. From 2007 to 2009, Corazón Sano y Feliz was pilot-tested in the community of Mixco. Corazón Sano y Feliz comprises a clinical risk assessment and treatment component implemented primarily by nurses, and a health education component implemented by community health workers. To accomplish our secondary objective of determining Corazon Sano y Feliz's potential for change at the patient level, we implemented a one-group pretest-posttest study design to examine changes in clinical measures, knowledge and practices between baseline and the end of the 6-month intervention. Two nurses and one physician set up a hypertension clinic to manage patients according to risk level. Twenty-nine community health workers

were trained in CVD risk reduction and health promotion and in turn led six educational sessions for patients. Comparing baseline and 6-month measures, the intervention achieved significant improvements in mean knowledge and behaviour (increase from 54.6 to 59.1 out of a possible 70 points) and significant reductions of mean systolic and diastolic blood pressure (27.2 and 7.7 mmHg), body mass index (from 26.5 to 26.2 kg/m²) and waist circumference (89.6-88.9 cm). In this pilot study we obtained preliminary evidence that this community-oriented hypertension management and health promotion intervention model was feasible and achieved significant reduction in risk factors. If scaled up, this intervention has the potential to substantially reduce CVD burden.

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