An evidence-based treatment programme in Kaiser Permanente, northern California,\(^1\) showed system-level success. This programme resulted in an increase in blood pressure control (44 to \(80\%\)) despite an increase in numbers of patients with hypertension; possibly due to better and earlier detection, which results independently in better treatment and control.

It is, however, important to recognise the necessity of individualising treatment. This approach was best seen in the physiologically based antihypertensive therapy as described by Spence.\(^1\) Such management can, if successful, be included into guidelines where appropriate.

Guidelines are an essential tool in the care of chronic diseases. They provide a means to update and disseminate information and the standard of care to all health sectors. However, they are only as good as the clinicians who implement them, and the system that provides the infrastructure for their implementation. Furthermore, they need to be appropriate for the system in which they will be implemented.

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