

- Blood pressure

Reducing sitting time may help elderly

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SPENDING less time sitting and moving around more often could help the elderly lower their blood pressure, according to an American study.



According to the study conducted by researchers at Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute, reducing the amount of time spent sitting by at least 30 minutes a day could help improve blood pressure in senior citizens.

The results, published in the journal 'Nutrition, Obesity and Exercise', are comparable to those seen in previous studies where participants exercised more.

To reach this conclusion, the researchers followed 283 overweight or obese people aged 60 to 89 for six months, who reported sitting for more than six hours a day.

At the start of the study, over half had high blood pressure, over a quarter had diabetes, and almost two-thirds were taking at least one blood pressure-lowering medication.

The researchers divided the participants into two groups.

The first, the intervention group, was monitored by a sports coach, who gave them advice on improving their lifestyle and reducing sedentary behaviour. People in this group were given a fitness tracker and a standing desk.

The second group, the control group, also had a health coach, but only to set healthy lifestyle goals, not to change their level of physical activity or become less sedentary.

At the end of the six-month observation period, the researchers found that members of the first group sat for

an average of 31 minutes less per day than the control group.

They also had nearly 3.5 mmHg lower blood pressure, "comparable to reductions of 4 mmHg in studies of

increased physical activity and 3 mmHg in studies of weight loss", the researchers indicate.

Elderly people generally sit for between 65 and 80 per cent of their waking hours, according to the study.

This level of sedentary behaviour can increase the risk of chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.