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- Professor James Sharman

Study finds just 7% of blood pressure monitors validated

In a study with global implications, the majority of blood pressure monitors available for purchase in Australia have to be found not to have undergone rigorous accuracy testing.

Researchers at the University of Tasmania's Menzies Institute for Medical Research discovered that most upper-arm and wrist-cuff home blood pressure devices and all the wrist-band wearable (cuff-less) devices available for purchase online in Australia had not been sufficiently validated.

For a device to be validated, it has gone through extensive testing to ensure it is accurate. In this study, the researchers looked at the online blood pressure device marketplace, including large companies such as Amazon and eBay.

The study, published in *Hypertension*, an American Heart Association journal, has major implications for best-practice care of people. It also highlights the importance of widespread public education and advocacy in the area, as well as regulation of the device industry to improve the availability of validated blood pressure devices.

Hypertension guidelines around the world recommend that home testing of blood pressure should be used for confirming the diagnosis of hypertension, or high blood pressure.

Deputy Director of the Menzies Institute for Medical Research and lead researcher on the study, Professor James Sharman, said this is

concerning because it means the non-validated devices being used are not trustworthy for diagnosis or follow-up of raised blood pressure.

“As we know, high blood pressure is the number one risk factor for cardiovascular disease and mortality worldwide. This makes accurate measurement and treatment critically important to prevent and limit the risk to patients.

“Most of the blood pressure devices sold online should not be used for clinical decision-making. However, it is likely they are being used for this purpose.

“Our extensive assessment showed that only 7% of the 972 models of blood pressure monitoring devices available for purchase had been validated,” Professor Sharman said.

Director of the Menzies Institute, Distinguished Professor Alison Venn, congratulated Professor Sharman and his team. “This is the kind of practical research we are committed to at Menzies. These findings will not only benefit the health of Australians but will also be important on a global scale.”

Before purchasing a blood pressure device, people should check that it has been validated at

<https://www.menzies.utas.edu.au/documents/pdfs/Blood-pressure-devices.pdf>

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