

# When the shopkeeper measures blood pressure: Novartis Foundation and partners prove effectiveness of community-based approach to tackling hypertension

Nov 27, 2018

- *Innovative ComHIP project in Ghana shows that bringing healthcare closer to where people live, work and shop effectively tackles hypertension – the most deadly non-communicable disease*
- *Digital health tools were a key enabler in the program*
- *The control rate of people with hypertension enrolled and retained in the program for over a year climbed from 36% to 72%*
- *The Ghanaian government is integrating the model into national policy and plans to scale-up to additional regions*
- *This form of community-based care could save millions of lives in other countries and for other NCDs*

**Basel, November 27, 2018** – Today, the Novartis Foundation and partners announced the results of an innovative approach to hypertension management in Ghana. The community-based hypertension improvement project (ComHIP) tested a new model to detect, diagnose and treat hypertension earlier by placing screening points in local shops and businesses and strengthening existing facilities. This captured patients beyond the reach of traditional health facilities. Digital health tools connected the new screening points with community health workers and physicians; supported nurses' decision-making; and empowered patients to self-manage their condition through messages sent to their mobile phones.

For people enrolled and retained in the program for over a year, hypertension control rates rose from 36% to 72%.

ComHIP is important because in Ghana, just 4%<sup>i</sup> of people with hypertension have their condition controlled, compared to 53% in the USA.<sup>ii</sup> Hypertension is the leading risk factor for cardiovascular disease – the most deadly non-communicable disease.

The project was implemented in partnership with the Ghana Health Service, FHI360, The Ghana School of Public Health, and The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.

Peter Lamptey, Professor of Non-communicable Diseases at The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine stated: "The ComHIP experience has global value. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death worldwide, and disproportionately affects low- and middle-income countries where risk factors such as hypertension are poorly controlled. That's why it's so encouraging to see that community-based and patient-centered care can improve hypertension control rates – it has the potential to save so many lives."

Dr. Ann Aerts, Head of the Novartis Foundation, said: "The most exciting thing about implementing digital health in the real world is how simple solutions that use existing technology can significantly impact people's health. ComHIP not only showed that non-traditional health players such as shopkeepers can play an

essential role in healthcare delivery, but also that mobile phones can make an enormous difference to people with hypertension. Digital technology was the glue, connecting people who screened positive for hypertension at the shops with healthcare workers, and helping patients adhere to medication, diet and exercise regimes – ultimately saving lives. This evidence demonstrates how multisector partnerships and digital solutions can revolutionize the way health systems around the world tackle NCDs.”

The success of the three-year ComHIP pilot led the Ghanaian government to integrate the project training curriculum and treatment guidelines into Ghana’s national policy, and commit to scaling-up the program to additional regions.

Dr. Emmanuel Ankrah Odame, Director of Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation at the Ghana Ministry of Health, said: “Hypertension rates in Ghana are increasing, so preventing its devastating consequences is a priority for the Government of Ghana. We were pleased with the ComHIP model of community-based care because its use of existing infrastructure makes it sustainable and easy to replicate.”

Dr. Koku Awoonor-Williams, Director of Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation at the Ghana Health Service, explained: “The ComHIP model shows that a community-based approach to hypertension management can save thousands of lives if it is scaled up to cover the entire country. We’re exploring how we can make this a reality.”

## About the Novartis Foundation

The Novartis Foundation is a philanthropic organization which strives to have sustainable impact on the health of low-income communities through a combination of programmatic work, health outcomes research, and its translation into policy to tackle global health challenges. We work hand-in-hand with local and global partners to catalyze sustainable healthcare models to improve access and health outcomes, and to accelerate efforts to eliminate leprosy and malaria by focusing on interventions that aim to interrupt transmission. Everything we do is grounded in evidence and innovation, and our work is a continuous cycle of evaluation, adaptation and application. In 2017, the operational budget for the Foundation was CHF 15 million and our programs reached 7 million people.

For more information, please visit:

[www.novartisfoundation.org](http://www.novartisfoundation.org)

[www.youtube.com/novartisfoundation](http://www.youtube.com/novartisfoundation)

<https://twitter.com/NovartisFDN>

Novartis Media Relations

Central media line: +41 61 324 2200

E-mail: [media.relations@novartis.com](mailto:media.relations@novartis.com)

Nikolaus Guntrum

Head Global Communications and Reporting,

Novartis Foundation

+41 (0)79 596 4661 (mobile)

[nikolaus.guntrum@novartis.com](mailto:nikolaus.guntrum@novartis.com)

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.novartisfoundation.org/news/media-release/when-shopkeeper-measures-blood->

**List of links present in page**

1. <https://www.novartisfoundation.org/news/media-release/when-shopkeeper-measures-blood-pressure-novartis-foundation-and-partners-prove-effectiveness-community-based-approach-tackling-hypertension>
2. <https://www.novartisfoundation.org/tags/category/population-health>
3. <https://www.novartisfoundation.org/tags/sub-category/better-hearts-better-cities>
4. <https://www.novartisfoundation.org/novartisfoundation/node/141>
5. <https://www.youtube.com/user/novartisfoundation>
6. <https://twitter.com/NovartisFDN>
7. <mailto:media.relations@novartis.com>
8. <mailto:nikolaus.guntrum@novartis.com>