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## Opinion

# Hypertension is also fought at the pace of dance

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Naples. Congress of the Italian Society for Cardiovascular Prevention (Siprec). Dance is the scene. Do not think of the teachers who start dancing, even if it would not hurt to give rhythm to scientific reports, but a new remedy to prevent high blood pressure or even lower it if it tends to rise above the norm.

An entire session dedicated to this defined exercise of excellence to combat hypertension and other cardiovascular diseases, which in Italy are responsible for 41% of deaths. 80% of these diseases are attributable to behavioral risk factors that can be easily modified such as smoking and alcohol, unhealthy diet and especially physical inactivity. More generally, these four incorrect lifestyles are the basis of 86% of all diseases. Cancer included. Their correction is not only prevention, but even cure. English doctors now prescribe physical activity as if it were a drug, specifying intensity and timing on the recipe. In the same way as dosages of drugs. And according to the World Health Organization (WHO), 3.2 million people die every year in the world due to physical inactivity. One of the terrible four bad habits that, like the Biblical plagues of Egypt, jeopardizes the health of the population of the planet.

To live long and in good health, then, a half hour of dance every other day can radically change a clinical picture tending to black, if not already compromised by hypertension. The guidelines of the major European experts suggest to practice a dynamic aerobic exercise for 30-45 minutes, 3-4 times a week, at a level of intensity equal to 50-70% of the maximum working load capacity. In fact, it is now widely recognized that regular aerobic physical activity, such as dance, can contribute to reducing blood pressure and preventing the development of coronary artery disease. By reducing only 2 millimeters of mercury (mmHg) the maximum pressure (systolic) in middle-aged patients, the risk of mortality from ischemia and other cardiovascular causes is reduced by 7% and the risk of mortality

from stroke by 10%. And regular physical activity allows to lower the high pressure of 3.1 mm of mercury on average.

In general, regular exercise is good for everyone, since it produces a hypotensive effect both in normotensive and hypertensive subjects, even if this is greater in the latter, being proportional to the starting values of the arterial pressure, and is more pronounced in women and in elderly subjects. Aerobic training improves the pressure values at rest, the pressure response to psycho-emotional stimuli and prevents cardiovascular events through numerous mechanisms, attenuating the tone of the sympathetic nervous system, decreasing the heart rate, improving the function of the walls of blood vessels with consequent reduction of the stiffness of the arteries, correcting the multiple factors of the metabolic syndrome. Furthermore, the extent of the pressure drop seems to be independent of intensity, duration and type of training.

Better yet if the exercise is engaging and entertaining. Just like dance. Recent international studies have identified the benefits that this type of sport brings to patients over 60, demonstrating that dance, regardless of the style practiced, is useful for improving strength and muscular endurance, agility, balance and coordination, and preventing osteoporosis and cardiovascular risks. Furthermore, this practice has the advantage of being attractive to all patient targets, as it can be selected and modified based on age, physical limitations and culture. To explain it is Massimo Volpe, cardiologist, director of the School of specialization in diseases of the cardiovascular system of the University "La Sapienza" of Rome: "It is essential for everyone, and especially for those suffering from cardiovascular diseases, consult your doctor or a specialist before undertaking any form of exercise, but in general we can say that the most suitable sports for this type of patients are those with aerobic metabolism - therefore of resistance rather than power - and medium or low cardio-circulatory involvement. It has only the merit of possessing these characteristics, but it also brings to those who practice it the psychological benefits deriving from its pleasant and amusing nature, whether practiced alone or in company, it can be perceived as a hobby rather than as an imposed physical effort. Or a therapy, and has so many styles and forms that can be adapted to any age and condition".

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