

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Importance of Medication Adherence in Hypertension**

Hypertension is an asymptomatic disease requiring long term lifestyle modifications and drug treatment. 3 in 10 or 6.4 million people in Malaysia have hypertension but only half of them are aware that they have the disease. Among these, 90% are on medication but only 45% have their blood pressure controlled. A significant factor contributing to sub-optimal blood pressure control is patient non-adherence to drug treatment.

Adherence in hypertension is the extent to which the medication-taking behavior of a patient corresponds with the therapeutic regimen prescribed by the healthcare provider. Excellent adherence to drug treatment is important in the successful treatment of hypertension to reduce the incidence of adverse cardiovascular events.

One of the major factors of non-adherence is also the side effects experienced from the anti-hypertensives prescribed such as headache, dizziness and ankle edema. As patients feel that the side effects affect their daily routine and reduce their quality of life, they decide not to take the medication. Thus, the use of well tolerated drugs can contribute to improving patient adherence and consequently, better blood pressure control.

ZANIDIP® (lercanidipine) is indicated for the treatment of mild to moderate essential hypertension with a convenient once-daily dosing. Lercanidipine is found to be an effective and well-tolerated antihypertensive with a good safety profile. Only 1.7% of patients discontinued antihypertensive medication due to adverse events, showing the good tolerability and persistence of patients in using the medication.

Poor persistence with antihypertensive medications is a factor for the discrepancy between the efficacy of drug treatment established through clinical trials and the results obtained in clinical practice. A study found that the rate of persistence was significantly higher in patients treated with lercanidipine compared to other CCBs (59.3% vs. 46.6%:  $p < 0.05$ ). The main reason for discontinuation of the medication was due to adverse effects. The higher rate of persistence with lercanidipine also led to better blood pressure control in that treatment group compared to other CCBs after 24 months of treatment. This shows the importance of persistence in treatment for the management of hypertension in patients.

***DR. DARREN LEE***