

Supplement 1. The questionnaire used in the interviews with patients.



IDI Online Interview Scenario with Hypertension Patients

NOTE: The MODERATOR (MOD) adjusts the wording of the scenario to match the language naturally used by the Respondent (e.g., pharmacotherapy → medications used, etc.)

Introduction	5 min
• Introduction of the moderator and the Cognosco company • Introduction of the interview topic: the patient's experience with hypertension treatment and living with the condition • Information about recording and anonymity • Respondent's self-introduction: name, age, family and professional situation, place of residence	
A. Current Stage of Hypertension Treatment	15 min
1. To begin, please tell me a bit about your health condition – how would you generally assess your health? What illnesses are you being treated or diagnosed for? How does this affect your daily life – for example, does your health condition or treatment limit your daily activities in any way? 2. How long have you had hypertension? Have you had any other heart-related issues (e.g., other diagnosed cardiovascular diseases, cardiovascular incidents)? 3. What does your current hypertension treatment look like? Which doctor is managing your therapy? How often do you have appointments? For how long are your medications prescribed? Do you try to see the same doctor, or are you scheduled with different ones? 4. Do you consult any other specialists regarding your hypertension? Which ones? Who initiates these consultations (do you go privately, ask your GP for a referral, or does your GP refer you)? If you see a cardiologist – what are the reasons for that visit? 5. What treatment are you currently using for hypertension? How do you assess its effectiveness – is the condition under control, or are you in the process of changing or planning to change treatment? 6. What are your habits regarding taking hypertension medications? 7. Are these the only medications you take? How many pills do you take for hypertension? And how many in total per day? 8. Do you take your hypertension medications at the same time every day? If not – why? 9. Do you prefer taking them in the morning or evening? 10. How do you manage remembering to take your hypertension medications daily? Please describe how it works in your regular daily routine and in special situations, like during travel	

(e.g., do you organize pills by week/day, follow a daily routine, keep a log, develop a habit, or use another method)?

11. How do you assess the effectiveness of your treatment (doctor's evaluation, self-monitoring)?
12. What is your target blood pressure? What is your usual current blood pressure? How often do you need to "lower" high blood pressure, e.g., by taking extra medication or seeking medical help (emergency, ER, night medical service)?
13. Is your blood pressure currently at the level your doctor aims for? Or are your medication doses still being increased to further lower it?
14. Do you discuss this with your doctor? Has your doctor told you what your target blood pressure should be or discussed therapeutic goals with you?
15. How often do you measure your blood pressure, and do you keep a log? Does your doctor review your home measurements?
16. Do you have your own blood pressure monitor? What kind (upper arm, wrist)?
17. Besides pharmacological treatment, what other recommendations have you received related to your condition? What do you think about them, and how well do you follow them? Which ones are you able to follow, and which are difficult or problematic?
18. What aspects of your current hypertension treatment do you consider most important? What is key in your situation for managing this condition? And which recommendations do you consider less important or more flexible?
19. What do you think about the need for long-term use of blood pressure medications? How difficult or problematic is this for you? Why?
20. In what situations and how often do you interrupt your medication use, either for a short or long time? What causes these breaks? Do you inform your doctor about them? How does your doctor react?
21. What difficulties or problems are associated with your current hypertension treatment? What is particularly burdensome? What raises doubts or concerns?
22. What information about the disease, its treatment, or lifestyle recommendations do you currently need? What would you like to talk about or learn more about?
23. What other support, materials, or resources would be helpful for you at this stage of treatment? Imagine an ideal situation where all your needs and expectations related to the disease and its treatment are met – what would you ask for?

B. Diagnosis and Early Treatment

15 min

MOD: Let's go back in time to the moment of diagnosis.

1. How did you find out that you have hypertension?
2. Who diagnosed the condition (what medical specialty)?
3. How did it happen that you went to the doctor who diagnosed hypertension (e.g., during another consultation, referral from another doctor – what specialty, routine check-up, occupational medicine, hospital, own initiative, other)?
4. Did you have any symptoms that concerned you? What were they?
5. How did the diagnostic process go – how long did it take? What tests were performed?

6. Did the doctor refer you to any other specialists – which ones?
7. Did the doctor ask you to monitor your blood pressure at home? For how long? Were there any difficulties or inconveniences related to this? How did the doctor assess your measurements – did they say you did it correctly, or did they have any concerns? What were they?
8. If home monitoring wasn't prescribed, had you previously done home measurements that the doctor reviewed?
9. During the diagnostic period, were you prescribed any blood pressure-lowering medications?
10. What other recommendations did you receive at that time (e.g., lifestyle changes, home monitoring, limiting stimulants, medical leave)?
11. Now think about the beginning of your treatment following the hypertension diagnosis. How do you remember that period? What was the biggest challenge or difficulty for you?
12. What recommendations did you receive from your doctor? What else were you told to do or avoid because of the condition?
13. Was the doctor able to tailor the treatment to your needs right away? How long did it take? How often did you have appointments at that time?
14. How did you respond to the prescribed treatment – did you notice any changes? Were there any problems or difficulties with the pharmacotherapy?
15. What concerns or doubts did you have about the prescribed treatment? Was anything worrying or discouraging? How did you cope with that?
16. In what situations did you stop taking a medication or stop treatment altogether? What caused that?
17. How difficult was it for you to follow the doctor's recommendations? What changes were required?
18. How well were you able to follow those recommendations? Which ones were you successful with, and which ones not?
19. Could you count on anyone's support during that time? In terms of managing hypertension and following recommendations?
Who supported you (your primary doctor, another doctor, nurse, dietitian, family member, friends, support groups, etc.)?
20. How did you react to the news that you had hypertension? What did you think at the time? What were you afraid of? Was it a surprise, or were you expecting such a diagnosis for some reason? Why?
21. What did you want to learn about the disease, living with it, and treatment?
What information were you missing?
What was the doctor's role in informing you about the disease and treatment? Was the information sufficient?
Did you have to look for information elsewhere? Where?
22. Where did you ultimately find the most useful information about hypertension treatment and living with the condition? Please share the most helpful sources during that stage of therapy.
23. From your experience and perspective, what kind of disease is hypertension?
How does it affect your life?
What worries you most about this condition?

24. What has the diagnosis of hypertension changed in your life?

Did you make any changes in your habits, approach to health, or diet? What were they?

Did you give anything up? Start doing something new?

25. Looking back – which of those changes have lasted and become new habits?

Which ones didn't last long?

Thank you for the conversation.