

Clinical inertia assessment

Act rapidly



Problem to address: Clinical inertia, sometimes called therapeutic inertia, occurs when a patient has uncontrolled high blood pressure (BP) and therapy is not intensified.

Clinical inertia is one of the most common factors contributing to uncontrolled hypertension. Issues leading to clinical inertia include uncertainty about a patient's "true" blood pressure, competing priorities during a visit, uncertainty about a patient's medication adherence, patient resistance to intensifying therapy and simply being unaware that clinical inertia exists. Clinicians and quality improvement leaders often object to this term because it can be perceived as unfairly blaming clinicians for a multifactorial problem. Although we agree with this sentiment, we use the term "clinical inertia" in this tool because it is the term used in scientific literature.

Instructions: Use this tool to measure how often clinical inertia occurs and identify contributing factors in your practice.

What you need: Electronic health record or charts from office visits eight to 10 weeks prior to self-assessment.

Guidance for practice site

- Identify sample of patient encounters you will review with tool
 - Using your practice's schedule, identify approximately 24 patient encounters that occurred eight to 10 weeks earlier. This can be done for each provider.
 - Review the BPs in the vitals section from these patient encounters to identify eight where the BP was $\geq 140/90$ mm Hg (i.e., encounters with uncontrolled hypertension).
 - Exclude visit if it is a new patient encounter or for a procedure (e.g., stress test or biopsy).
 - Ensure you identify eight patients that meet these criteria. You may go to the next step by completing the "Act rapidly: Assessment" tool.
- Use each patient's medical record to complete this tool

This tool was adapted with permission of the American Medical Association and The Johns Hopkins University. The original copyrighted content can be found at ama-assn.org/ama-johns-hopkins-blood-pressure-resources

This resource is part of AMA MAP BP™, a quality improvement program. Using a single or subset of AMA MAP BP tools or resources does not constitute implementing this program. AMA MAP BP includes guidance from AMA hypertension experts and has been shown to improve BP control rates by 10 percentage points and sustain results.

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