**Pharmacists – Our Most Underutilized Healthcare Professionals**

A campaign in pharmacies in Portugal to encourage customers to have their blood pressure and cholesterol measured in-store found that almost half of the people who participated had a high risk of developing a fatal cardiovascular event in the next 10 years.

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Almost 40% of the 12 930 individuals surveyed during the weeklong campaign, entitled "Know your heart values," had BPs above target (>140/90 mm Hg) and were not taking any medication for this. And even among those already taking antihypertensives, almost half (48.3%) still had BP above target, explained **Dr Cristina Santos** (National Association of Pharmacies [ANF], Lisbon, Portugal), who presented her findings as a poster during the recent **European Society of Hypertension** (ESH) **[European Meeting on Hypertension 2012](http://www.theheart.org/viewDocument.do?document=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.theheart.org%2FviewDocument.do%3Fdocument%3Dhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.theheart.org%252FviewDocument.do%253Fdocument%253Dhttp%25253A%25252F%25252Fwww.theheart.org%25252Fconferences%25252Fesh%25252F2012.do" \t "_blank)**.

She believes more use should be made of the expertise and accessibility of pharmacists. "Pharmacies are really accessible, they have a health professional in there with specific training, and it's very important that customers know that they can go to a pharmacy and have a quick check of their BP or cholesterol. It's really important, even for patients who have already been diagnosed. It's key for them to be monitored in the pharmacy." Most physicians, Santos says, welcome this development: "They can have a partner who can send them information about how their patients are."