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## ORIGINAL RESEARCH

### A qualitative study on the experiences of hypertension patients undergoing cupping therapy

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#### Abstract

Hypertension is one of the silent killer diseases because patients often do not feel the symptoms. Therapies that are commonly applied are pharmacological and non-pharmacological therapies, which include complementary medicine. These complementary therapies play a role in promoting healing, comfort and care around the world. One of the treatments used in hypertensive patients is cupping. This study aims to explore the experiences and perceptions of hypertensive patients undergoing cupping complementary therapy. A qualitative descriptive design has been used in this study. There were 6 participants selected using purposive sampling from two clinics namely Rumah Sehat Insani and Rumah Sehat Holistik in Care. The data collection method used was in-depth interviews. Data were processed and analyzed using seven steps of data analysis based on Colaizzi. There are 4 theme findings including the description of patient perceptions related to hypertension which includes perceptions related to knowledge, causes and symptoms of hypertension; description of perceptions related to cupping therapy including unfamiliarity with the term complementary medicine, perceptions of cupping functions and types of cupping; benefits/effects of cupping felt by participants in the form of psychological effects and physiological effects; and reasons for participants undergoing cupping therapy in the form of the influence of family and friends, the influence of distance, religious factors, drug factors, and physical factors. Most participants were still unfamiliar with the term complementary medicine. The expression of positive effects experienced by participants that could be felt immediately after treatment was the reason for using cupping. This suggests its potential as part of a holistic approach in the management of this condition. The result encourage further research to validate this approach as a safe complementary treatment for hypertension.

**Keywords:** Hypertension; complementary therapy; cupping therapy; eastern medicine; nursing care

#### Introduction

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are responsible for 71% of all global deaths, with a staggering 77% of these cases occurring in lower-middle-income countries. Among the various NCDs, hypertension, or high blood pressure, stands out as a significant risk factor that increases the likelihood of premature death, particularly in these vulnerable regions. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 1.28 billion adults globally suffer from hypertension, with a notably high prevalence in low- and middle-income countries (Kario, Okura, Hoshida, & Mogi, 2024). In the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY), research indicates that the prevalence of hypertension reaches 11.01%, surpassing the national average of 8.8% (Dinas Kesehatan DIY, 2020). Over the past few years, hypertension has consistently ranked among the top ten diseases and causes of death in DIY. Management of hypertension typically involves two primary approaches: pharmacological treatments, which include diuretics, central sympatholytic, and vasodilators, and non-pharmacological strategies, such as weight loss, regular exercise, low salt diets, and complementary therapies (Kusuma et al., 2021). Complementary therapies, including cupping, have been utilized for centuries and are recognized for their potential benefits in managing chronic conditions like hypertension (Lee, Choi, Shin, Kim, & Nam, 2010). The WHO reports that approximately 80% of healthcare in developing countries relies on traditional practices. Various complementary treatments, such as the use of traditional plants, acupuncture, acupressure, and cupping, have been identified as beneficial in lowering blood pressure (Nahas, 2008). Many individuals turn to these therapies for various reasons, including trust in traditional methods, financial considerations, concerns about chemical drug reactions, and perceived effectiveness. For patients with chronic diseases, complementary therapies may be viewed as more affordable alternatives, especially when faced with ongoing medical expenses (Kohl-Heckl, Schröter, & Cramer, 2022).

Recent studies have highlighted the self-use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) among patients with hypertension, aiming to control blood pressure and enhance quality of life (Syahputra et al., 2019). Many patients report using various CAM products, with cupping being one of the most popular. Modern medical research has provided substantial evidence indicating that cupping therapy can effectively remove damaged blood components, such as abnormal blood cells and residual creatinine, while preserving healthy blood cells. Cupping has shown efficacy in treating several conditions, including high LDL cholesterol, gout, diabetes, heart disorders, hypertension, stroke, and nerve function disorders. Additionally, cupping therapy has been found to promote red blood cell regeneration and increase natural antioxidants in the body (Lu et al., 2019). Previous studies have demonstrated that cupping therapy can lower blood pressure (Astuti & Setyawan, 2022; Al-Tabakha et al., 2018; Aleyeidi, Aseri, Matbouli, Sulaiamani, & Kobeisy, 2015; Muflih & Judha, 2019), reduce anxiety, improve sleep quality (Hendrawati et al., 2021), and alleviate neck pain (Setyawan, Ula, Hikmawati, & Kartina, 2021). While some patients report mild side effects such as skin irritation, fever, and itching post-cupping, serious adverse effects are rare, with blisters being the most common outcome.

Despite the widespread use of complementary therapies, there remains a significant gap in specific scientific research that investigates the effectiveness of cupping therapy in managing hypertension. While many individuals turn to cupping as a form of alternative treatment, the existing body of literature predominantly emphasizes patients' subjective experiences rather than providing robust objective clinical evidence. This lack of rigorous scientific inquiry presents a challenge for healthcare professionals and patients alike, as it limits the understanding of how cupping may influence blood pressure regulation and overall health outcomes. The reliance on anecdotal evidence can lead to misconceptions about the efficacy of such therapies, underscoring the need for comprehensive studies that can substantiate or refute these claims through empirical data. This study aims to fill this critical gap by offering a thorough exploratory analysis of the experiences of hypertensive patients undergoing cupping therapy, while simultaneously evaluating its effectiveness in reducing blood pressure. Employing a holistic and evidence-based approach intends to delve into the multifaceted nature of cupping therapy, examining not only its physiological effects but also the psychological and emotional dimensions experienced by patients. The findings from this study could provide valuable insights into the mechanisms through which cupping exerts its effects, as well as the potential benefits and limitations associated with its use in hypertension management. Ultimately, this research aspires to bridge the divide between traditional practices and modern medical standards, fostering a greater understanding of how complementary therapies can be integrated into conventional healthcare frameworks. To achieve these objectives, the methodology will encompass a combination of in-depth interviews with patients, thorough analysis of blood pressure data collected before and after therapy, and direct observation throughout the study period. This approach will allow for a comprehensive assessment of both qualitative data, providing a more nuanced understanding of the impact of cupping on hypertension. Systematically documenting patient experiences and correlating them with clinical outcomes hopes to establish stronger scientific evidence regarding the role of cupping therapy in managing hypertension. Such findings could contribute significantly to a more integrative understanding of complementary therapies within the healthcare landscape, ultimately guiding clinicians and patients in making informed decisions about incorporating alternative treatments into their management plans.

## Method

This research employs a qualitative descriptive design aimed at elucidating and interpreting human behavior and experiences, particularly in the context of hypertension management through cupping therapy. Qualitative descriptive research is particularly effective in providing a comprehensive understanding of specific social settings or phenomena by meticulously describing relevant variables and their interrelations (Renjith, Yesodharan, Noronha, Ladd, & George, 2021). This design facilitates an in-depth exploration of participants' lived experiences, allowing for rich, contextual insights that quantitative methods may overlook (Pyo, Lee, Choi, Jang, & Ock, 2023). Data collection for this study was conducted over a two-month period, from November to December 2023, at two healthcare facilities: Rumah Sehat Insani and Rumah Sehat Holistik in Care, both of which are located in Yogyakarta. The population targeted in this study consisted of individuals diagnosed with hypertension by a qualified medical professional in Yogyakarta. To ensure that the sample was relevant and informative, a purposive sampling technique was employed. This method involved selecting participants who had direct experiences pertinent to the phenomenon under investigation. A total of six participants were recruited based on specific inclusion criteria: they must have a confirmed diagnosis of hypertension, regularly engage in cupping therapy, and reside in Yogyakarta. Additionally, individuals with complications such as uncontrolled diabetes or kidney failure were excluded from the study to maintain a focus on those whose experiences with cupping therapy were directly related to hypertension management. Data saturation, a critical concept in qualitative research, was achieved after the

fifth participant, as no new codes emerged from the analysis of their statements. To further ensure the robustness of the findings, an additional participant was included to reconfirm that data saturation had indeed occurred.

Data collection was meticulously carried out through a combination of in-depth interviews, semi-structured interview guides, questionnaires, and participant observations. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility in questioning while ensuring that key topics relevant to the research objectives were covered. The principle of trustworthiness was upheld throughout the study to validate the data collected. Triangulation of data sources, member checking, and peer debriefing were employed to confirm that the experiences captured by the researcher accurately reflected the participants' realities and answered the research questions effectively. Member checking involved returning to participants with the findings to verify their accuracy and resonance with the participants' narratives. Additionally, peer debriefing provided an opportunity for external validation of the research process and findings, enhancing the credibility of the study. To further ensure data integrity, the researcher conducted meticulous checks of the transcriptions to eliminate errors and clarify any ambiguous descriptions or meanings during the coding process.

Qualitative data analysis was executed using the Colaizzi method, a systematic approach that emphasizes the extraction of themes from participants' narratives. Initially, the interviews were transcribed verbatim, ensuring that every detail of the participants' accounts was captured. Subsequently, the researcher engaged in a thorough thematic analysis to identify and synthesize the main themes emerging from the data. These themes were then presented back to the participants for confirmation, a process that not only validates the findings but also enriches the overall understanding of the participants' experiences. Ethical considerations were paramount in this research, with approval obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), documented under Number KE/FK/1655/EC/2023. This ethical oversight ensures that the study adheres to established standards for conducting research involving human subjects, safeguarding participants' rights and well-being throughout the research process. Through this rigorous methodology, the study aims to contribute valuable insights into the role of cupping therapy in managing hypertension, ultimately fostering a deeper understanding of complementary therapies within the broader context of healthcare. The findings are expected to inform healthcare practitioners, policymakers, and patients, guiding more integrative approaches to hypertension management that encompass both conventional and complementary treatment modalities.

## Results

This study involved six participants who were hypertensive patients meeting the criteria for research subjects. The participants represented a diverse range of ages and occupational backgrounds, with varying durations of hypertension and experiences with cupping therapy (**Table 1**). Blood pressure readings taken over the last month—before and after therapy—showed variations, with some participants experiencing a decrease in blood pressure following cupping therapy. The findings of this study highlighted four main themes based on the participants' experiences with cupping as a complementary therapy for hypertension (**Table 2**).

**Table 1.** Characteristics of participants.

Participant	Gender	Age (Years old)	Job	Duration of hypertension	Medications	Length of cupping therapy
P1	Female	53	Private business	14 years	Amlodipin	>3 years
P2	Female	52	Housewife	4 years	Coirval	3 years
P3	Female	40	Housewife	>3 years	Amlodipin	4 months
P4	Female	61	Housewife	5 years	Kandesartan	>6 years
P5	Female	66	Housewife	> 10 years	Amlodipin	>5 years
P6	Female	35	Private employee	3.5 years	Amlodipin	10 months

The first theme examined participants' perceptions of hypertension, encompassing their understanding of the disease, its causes, and associated symptoms. Participants described hypertension as a condition characterized by elevated blood pressure, often attributed to hereditary factors and advancing age. They noted that pregnancy could also influence blood pressure levels. Additionally, many participants identified lifestyle factors such as unhealthy eating habits, physical fatigue, and stress as contributing causes of hypertension. This theme highlights the participants' awareness of both biological and environmental influences on their condition, reflecting a holistic understanding of the complexities surrounding hypertension management. By recognizing these factors, participants demonstrated a

proactive approach to their health, indicating a desire to address both the physiological and lifestyle elements that contribute to their hypertension.

*“Yes, it’s just that my blood pressure rises, but I don’t really understand it, no, it’s just like that, because I have heredity, my mother happens to have high blood pressure” (P1).*

*“Then yes, it can be influenced by eating salty foods, then coconut milk, fried foods, yes I have reduced it a lot, but how come I still have it” (P5).*

*“What is it, hehehe yes as far as I know, if you have a lot of thoughts, that can cause high blood pressure” (P5).*

**Table 2.** Study findings.

Categories	Themes
1. Perception of what hypertension is 2. Perception of the Causes of Hypertension 3. Perception of Hypertension Symptoms	Overview of Patient Perceptions of Hypertension
1. Unfamiliar with complementary medicine terms 2. Perception of cupping therapy function 3. Perception of cupping classification	Overview of perceptions of cupping therapy
1. Physiological Benefits 2. Psychological Benefits	Benefits/Effects of cupping therapy felt by hypertensive patients
1. Influence of family and friends 2. Influence of distance 3. Religious factors 4. Drug factor 5. Physical Factors	Reasons participants use cupping therapy

Participants reported experiencing a range of symptoms, including headaches, dizziness, weakness, and general discomfort in their bodies. They shared their personal experiences, detailing various feelings of unease and the physical impacts that hypertension had on their daily lives. These symptoms not only affected their physical well-being but also contributed to emotional distress, highlighting the significant burden of living with this condition. Participants expressed how these discomforts influenced their daily activities and overall quality of life, underscoring the need for effective management strategies to alleviate their symptoms.

*“A few months ago, it was dizziness. Because the tension is a bit high right. Dizziness. It’s uncomfortable” (P3).*

*“My body feels weak, then it’s usually like this, I want to do something lazy, that’s a sign that maybe my tension is rising”(P1).*

The second theme reflects the perceptions of hypertensive participants regarding cupping therapy. Many participants were unfamiliar with the term "complementary medicine" and expressed their views on the process and types of cupping they experienced. Those who underwent cupping regarded it as an alternative therapy; however, when asked about complementary medicine, most participants did not recognize the term. This lack of familiarity highlights a gap in awareness about alternative treatment options and their classification, suggesting a need for increased education and information about complementary therapies among patients managing hypertension.

*“Yes, if people say alternative, yes. Okay, yes. It can help a little. Maybe. Maybe” (P3).*

*“Yes, treatment supports from, not from the medical side” (P6).*

*“I don’t know” (P1).*

*“I don’t know, sis” (P4).*

Participants indicated that the cupping therapy process helped to cleanse "dirty blood," improve blood circulation, and expel "wind," based on their experiences during the therapy. They described feeling a sense of relief and rejuvenation, attributing these benefits to the cupping technique. This feedback suggests that participants believed cupping therapy played a significant role in enhancing their overall well-being and managing their symptoms associated with hypertension.

*"The blood is taken; it is said to be dirty blood. Then it helps improve blood circulation" (P4).*

*"What yes, if you have a cold, we do it to get rid of the gas" (P2).*

They also demonstrated an understanding of the different types of cupping, including wet cupping and dry cupping. However, some participants had only experienced wet cupping and had never tried dry cupping. This distinction reflects their awareness of the various cupping methods available, even if their personal experience was limited to one type.

*"Yes, I only know the dry and wet types, but I have only tried the wet one" (P1).*

The third theme highlights the benefits of cupping therapy as experienced by hypertensive participants. Responses to the effects of cupping therapy varied among participants, with perceived benefits categorized into physiological and psychological effects. The immediate physiological effects reported included a reduction in pain and dizziness, lower blood pressure, alleviation of discomfort, and an overall feeling of lightness. These positive outcomes suggest that cupping therapy may play a significant role in enhancing both physical health and well-being for individuals managing hypertension.

*"After cupping, it feels light, light sis, who feel to go dizzy to go home lightly, riding a motorbike is also comfortable" (P5)*

*"Yes, it has decreased, in fact the blood pressure has decreased" (P5).*

*"It's good. The body feels good" (P3).*

On the other hand, the psychological benefits of cupping therapy included a strong belief in the numerous advantages gained from the process. Some participants expressed confidence that this therapy positively impacted their health, contributing to a sense of empowerment and well-being. This belief in the efficacy of cupping therapy not only enhanced their overall experience but also reinforced their commitment to managing their hypertension through complementary approaches.

*"There are many benefits that I take from cupping" (P1).*

The fourth theme explores the reasons participants chose to undergo cupping therapy, which included influences from family and friends, geographical accessibility, religious beliefs, medicinal factors, and physical considerations. The influence of family and friends played a significant role, as participants often considered the experiences of their relatives, such as the use of cupping by family members or recommendations from friends. For instance, some participants decided to try cupping based on the positive experiences shared by their husbands or children, who had regularly practiced cupping before. This familial encouragement and shared experiences contributed to their willingness to engage in this alternative therapy.

*"My husband was already a regular cupper, my late husband, there was already a routine cupping" (P1).*

Support and advice from family members also played a crucial role in participants' decisions to try cupping therapy. Recommendations from younger siblings or other relatives, who shared their own positive experiences or information they had received about cupping, significantly influenced participants' willingness to explore this treatment option. This familial support not only provided reassurance but also fostered a sense of community and shared understanding regarding the benefits of cupping therapy.

*"My sister told me to try cupping. oh well, try it. I have done it before. Oh yes, it's good" (P3).*

*"Ohh because my mother had previously cupped and then I was told too" (P6).*

The effect of distance also influenced participants' choice of cupping therapy, as many preferred facilities located close to their homes. This proximity facilitated accessibility and provided a sense of comfort when undergoing the therapy. The convenience of having nearby options made it easier for participants to attend sessions regularly, thereby enhancing their overall experience and commitment to the treatment.

*"Near my house, there is cupping, so I keep trying it" (P1).*

Other reasons that encouraged participants to choose cupping therapy included religious considerations, as many sought to follow the Sunnah and teachings of their faith. Some participants expressed that their adherence to religious teachings significantly motivated them to undergo cupping therapy, viewing it as a practice aligned with their spiritual beliefs. This connection between their faith and health practices underscores the importance of cultural and religious contexts in shaping individuals' approaches to complementary therapies.

*"Besides that, because of the sunnah of the prophet" (P4).*

*"It is clearly that the first is sunnah, the second is for health" (P6).*

In addition, participants considered the desire to avoid the use of chemical medications, expressing a preference for maintaining their body's natural health. This inclination reflects a holistic approach to wellness, where participants sought alternatives to pharmaceuticals in order to support their health in a more natural way. Their commitment to avoiding chemical drugs highlights a broader trend towards seeking complementary therapies like cupping as part of their overall health management strategy.

*"Yeah, it feels like rather than chemical there are many drugs" (P6).*

Physical factors also played a significant role, as participants sought cupping therapy when they were not feeling well, aiming to improve their health and alleviate discomfort. Many participants expressed a desire to address specific health complaints, viewing cupping as a proactive approach to enhance their overall well-being. This connection between physical health and the decision to pursue cupping therapy underscores the importance of addressing both immediate and long-term health concerns in their treatment choices.

*"Yes, healthy. Everything is normal. I want it anyway. Immediately normal" (P3).*

*"Yes, continue to be healthy" (P5).*

*"There are not many complaints, usually when you get older there are usually more complaints" (P1).*

## Discussion

Hypertension is a significant risk factor for heart disease, stroke, and numerous other complications. The first theme in this study explores the underlying causes and challenges of hypertension, focusing on lifestyle management and stress control as primary elements of hypertension management. Research described that many people perceive hypertension as largely influenced by mental stress and excessive salt intake (Kurniawan, Renjaan, & Yani, 2019). This belief aligns with findings who identified diverse causes of hypertension, including gender, alcohol consumption, smoking, age, hereditary factors, stress, and comorbid diseases (Anisa, Bangun, & Sinulingga, 2014). Furthermore, studies indicate that individuals with a family history of hypertension have a higher likelihood of developing the condition (Dismiantoni, Anggunan, Triswanti, & Kriswiastiny, 2020). Blood pressure also tends to increase progressively with age, as decreased vascular elasticity contributes to heightened blood pressure levels. Understanding these contributing factors can aid healthcare providers in devising more targeted strategies for preventing and managing hypertension.

This study's findings indicate that participants generally understood hypertension as elevated blood pressure and poor circulation, consistent with standard definitions. Hypertension as a condition marked by persistently high blood pressure, which can lead to increased morbidity and mortality. However, Tan et al. (2017) found that many patients lacked knowledge of specific blood pressure ranges considered normal or high, indicating gaps in patient education. Symptoms commonly associated with hypertension, as reported by participants in this study, included headaches, dizziness, and general weakness. Other symptoms, such as blurred vision, stiff neck, and back pain, also contribute to patients' awareness of their condition. Tan et al. (2017) further revealed that symptoms like dizziness and sweating are often viewed by patients as warning signs, underscoring the importance of symptom recognition in hypertension management. The second theme centers on the perception and use of cupping therapy as a complementary approach to hypertension management. Many participants viewed cupping as an alternative or supportive treatment but were unfamiliar with the term "complementary medicine." This is similar to findings who noted that hypertensive patients in Iraq were also unfamiliar with the term "complementary and alternative medicine" (CAM), likely due to linguistic and cultural differences (Ibrahim, Hassali, Saleem, & Al Tukmagi, 2016). Studies by Purboyekti (2017) and Yasin (2007) suggest that cupping therapy may help reduce blood pressure by promoting blood circulation and eliminating toxins from the body. This aligns

with research which demonstrated a significant reduction in blood pressure following wet cupping therapy among hypertensive patients (Aleyeidi, Aseri, Matbouli, Sulaiamani, & Kobeisy, 2015).

The third theme examines the physiological and psychological effects of cupping therapy on hypertensive patients. Physiological benefits include pain reduction and a decrease in blood pressure (Aleyeidi, Aseri, Matbouli, Sulaiamani, & Kobeisy, 2015). Immediate reductions in blood pressure were observed after cupping, with studies by Asis et al. (2021) reporting sustained effects for several weeks. These reductions may be attributed to blood component removal, vasodilation, and blood vessel relaxation. On the psychological front, cupping is believed to provide relaxation and improved mood through the release of endorphins, stimulated by suction on skin and nerve endings (Lindquist et al., 2018; Ibrahim, 2016). This endorphin release can lower heart rate, cardiac output, and ultimately, blood pressure. Stimulation of specific meridian points during cupping may also activate organs like the liver and kidneys, promoting relaxation through the inhibition of the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system (Siregar, 2020). The final theme discusses factors influencing patients' decisions to undergo cupping therapy. Family and social support were key motivators, as highlighted by Humaira et al. (2022) and Mangendai et al. (2017). Syahputra et al. (2019) found that cupping therapy positively impacted hypertensive patients' social interactions and quality of life. Religious beliefs also played a role, as some participants cited the practice as a form of Sunnah worship. A desire to reduce reliance on medication and improve overall health was another common motivation. These findings reinforce the importance of a holistic approach to hypertension management, incorporating alternative therapies like cupping as viable options for blood pressure control. Collectively, these insights lay the groundwork for developing comprehensive strategies in hypertension prevention and management, bridging conventional and complementary therapies to address patient needs more effectively.

Nurses can play a significant role in providing cupping therapy as part of a comprehensive approach to managing hypertension, particularly within a complementary and integrative health framework. With appropriate training, nurses can offer cupping therapy to help manage blood pressure by facilitating relaxation, reducing stress, and potentially improving circulation—all factors that can positively influence hypertension. Their role includes assessing patient suitability, educating patients on the benefits and risks, and safely administering the therapy in clinical or home care settings. Integrating cupping therapy, nurses can offer patients a culturally accepted, holistic approach that complements conventional treatments. Moreover, as trusted healthcare providers, nurses are well-positioned to discuss how complementary therapies like cupping can be part of a balanced lifestyle, alongside diet, exercise, and medications, to better manage hypertension. However, several barriers can affect the successful integration of cupping therapy by nurses in hypertension care. First, a lack of standardized training and guidelines for cupping therapy can hinder its safe and effective administration. Additionally, some nurses may be hesitant due to limited familiarity with complementary therapies or concerns about liability and patient safety. Overcoming these barriers involves developing structured training programs and evidence-based protocols for cupping therapy, ensuring nurses gain competence and confidence in providing this service. Collaboration with interdisciplinary teams and inclusion of complementary therapy practices in nursing curricula can further support its safe use. Additionally, educating patients about cupping as an adjunctive therapy, rather than a replacement for standard hypertension treatments, can help manage expectations and ensure its responsible use.

## Conclusion

Most participants in the study reported being unfamiliar with the term "complementary medicine," highlighting a significant gap in awareness and understanding of alternative therapies among patients with hypertension. Despite this unfamiliarity, many participants expressed experiencing positive effects that were felt immediately after receiving cupping therapy. These immediate benefits suggest that cupping may hold promise as a viable component of a holistic approach to managing hypertension, integrating both conventional medical practices and complementary therapies. The positive experiences reported by participants underscore the potential of cupping therapy to enhance patient outcomes and improve overall well-being. As healthcare providers, particularly nurses, play a crucial role in patient education and support. The findings of this study encourage further research to validate cupping therapy as a safe and effective complementary treatment for hypertension. Such research could lead to the development of evidence-based guidelines that incorporate complementary therapies into standard nursing practice. This integration would not only enhance the holistic care provided to patients but also promote a more patient-centered approach to hypertension management. Recognizing the potential of complementary therapies like cupping can contribute to a more comprehensive treatment plan that addresses the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of patients.

## Author's declaration

The first author was responsible for obtaining ethical clearance, conducting a comprehensive literature review, executing the research, and overseeing the manuscript writing process. This included drafting initial sections, synthesizing findings, and revising the manuscript to enhance clarity and coherence. The first author played a pivotal role in ensuring that the research adhered to ethical standards and that the literature review effectively contextualized the study within existing scholarship. The second and third authors significantly contributed to the manuscript's development by collaborating on the organization and systematic structure of the writing.

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None declare.

## Availability of data and materials

All data are available from the authors.

## Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interest.

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## Authors' insight

### Key points

- Cupping therapy may hold promise as a viable component of a holistic approach to managing hypertension
- Nurses play a crucial role in patient education and support of using cupping therapy
- The need for additional studies to confirm the safety and efficacy of cupping therapy in managing hypertension

### Emerging nursing avenues

- What motivated patients to seek cupping therapy as a treatment for your hypertension?
- Can patients describe your experiences during and after cupping therapy sessions?
- How do nurses perceive the role of cupping therapy in your overall hypertension management?

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