

individuals with elevated blood pressure respond to drug treatment with tolerable or no side effects, but need to continue treatment for many years—usually for the rest of their lives.

A national public health campaign began in the 1970s to encourage individuals to know their blood pressure and to urge clinicians to treat detected elevated levels. In recent decades, national surveys have indicated that a gradually increasing percentage of patients with elevated blood pressures are being successfully treated and that there has been a substantial reduction in strokes and deaths from strokes. Recent evidence showing that reducing the high salt levels in the U.S. diet can reduce the average level of blood pressure has prompted renewed public health efforts to change eating habits and the contents of commercial foods.

Today, treatment of high blood pressure is recognized as one of the most cost-effective interventions. Its cost per quality adjusted life-year (QALY) saved is only a few thousand dollars a year for the average person. For high-risk groups, such as those with diabetes, it actually saves money to monitor and treat high blood pressure rather than allow it to cause or exacerbate other health problems requiring more expensive treatments.

## Discussion Questions

1. How does this history of high blood pressure demonstrate the problem description and etiology components of the P.E.R.I.E. process? What different types of studies were used to establish etiology or contributory cause?
2. How does this history of high blood pressure illustrate the evidence-based recommendations and