

Diabetes heart risk "equivalent to 15 years aging"



By Patricia Reaney

Fri Jun 30, 8:34 AM ET

Diabetics are at risk of developing cardiovascular disease, one of the world's biggest killers, 15 years earlier than other people, according to a scientist on Friday.

So a person with diabetes aged 40 has the same odds of having a stroke or heart attack as a healthy person of 55.

"Diabetes confers the same risk of cardiovascular disease as aging 15 years," said Gillian Booth of the Institute of Clinical Evaluation Sciences in Toronto, in an interview.

But she added that not all people with diabetes are at high risk. Those that are do not reach the high level until they are in their early to late 40s.

Diabetes is a chronic illness that occurs when the body does not produce enough, or effectively use, insulin.

Men with diabetes usually go from the moderate to high risk category at about 41 years old while in women it is 48. In the general population it occurs 15 years later.

"People with diabetes certainly are at a high risk of getting heart disease and there is a shift toward early heart disease, so the effect is quite significant," Booth added.

In research reported in The Lancet medical journal, Booth and her team also showed that young adults with diabetes have rates of coronary heart disease 12-40 times higher than those in people without diabetes.

The scientists assessed the age at which diabetics develop a high risk of cardiovascular disease by looking at 379,000 people with the illness in Ontario and more than 9 million residents without it.

By recording when heart attacks and strokes occurred in the two groups between April 1994 and March 2000, the researchers determined the increased risk.

Diabetes, which is linked to obesity, also carries an increased risk of kidney damage and nerve disorder that can lead to amputations. The World Health Organization estimated that the number of people worldwide with diabetes in 2000 was 177 million. It is expected to rise to 300 million by 2025.

Although diabetics have a raised risk of heart attack or stroke, Booth said not all people with the illness have the same level of risk and should not receive the same medical treatment.

Treatments to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease include moderate exercise and a healthy diet, cholesterol-lowering drugs, low-dose aspirin and drugs such as Ace inhibitors to lower blood pressure.

"We should be individualizing treatment (of diabetics), rather than treating them all the same," said Booth.

Copyright © 2006 Reuters Limited. All rights reserved. Republication or redistribution of Reuters content is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of Reuters. Reuters shall not be liable for any errors or delays in the content, or for any actions taken in reliance thereon.

Copyright © 2006 Yahoo! Inc. All rights reserved.

[Questions or Comments](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Copyright/IP Policy](#) - [Ad Feedback](#)