Cardiovascular Disease

**What is cardiovascular disease?**

Cardiovascular disease is a term for disease's of the heart and blood vessels. The term usually includes disease's such as coronary heart disease, heart failure, cardiomyopathy, congenital heart disease, peripheral vascular disease and stroke.

**Risk factors**

Major risk factors associated with Cardiovascular disease that cannot be modified include advancing age, genetic predisposition, gender and ethnicity. Modifiable risk factors include behavioural factors such as tobacco smoking, insufficient physical activity, poor diet and excessive alcohol consumption. Biomedical factors also play a major role, such as high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and overweight and obesity.

**Short term effects**

Short term effects of Cardiovascular disease includes narrowing of the artery walls, fat deposition in the arterial walls, pain in the arm, neck or jaw, high cholesterol, high triglycerides, high blood pressure, poor physical activity and obesity.

**Long term effects**

Long term effects of Cardiovascular disease includes plaque deposits in the inner wall of the arteries preventing blood flow and causing Angina - which means chest pain. Muscles of the heart become weak leading to ineffective pumping actions leading to heart failure. Symptoms like chest
pain, breathlessness, jaw pain, neck pain and pain in the arm.

Statistics and health issues

The total number of deaths due to cardiovascular disease is estimated to be around 1.73 million a year according to WHO. Three quarters of Cardiovascular disease take place in low or middle income countries which is mainly because of smoking, drinking and poor lifestyle. Early detection, diet control, counselling, medication, healthy lifestyle, weight control, proper physical activity can help in preventing heart disease. Awareness programs about prevention of heart attacks and better health care is being promoted on social media and in the community all around the world.

Other resource links

Further information about cardiovascular disease can be found at the Heart Foundation website. Further information about stroke can be found on the National Stroke Foundation website. Information relating to monitoring and surveillance of vascular diseases, including cardiovascular publications, can be found at the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare website. Healthdirect Australia has information on heart problems and cardiovascular health.
Coronary Artery Disease

Coronary Arteries

Chandon Kelman. 7E