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Coronary Artery Disease is epidemic in Egypt

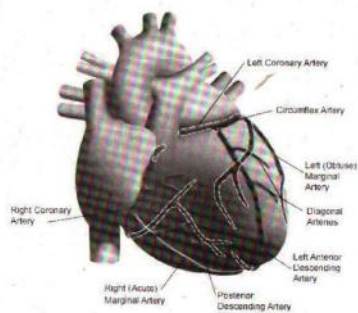
CAD INCREASINGLY AFFECTS A YOUNGER DEMOGRAPHIC DUE TO SMOKING AND UNHEALTHY DIETS

By Nourhan El-Sebahy

Coronary artery disease (CAD) is the most common and popular type of heart disease in Egypt, said Adel Shabana, Cardiology Consultant at the Faculty of Medicine at Ain Shams University.

Heart disease occurs as a result of buildup in coronary arteries; a condition which called "atherosclerosis" causes blockages, he continued.

During the "Cardio Prevent" conference, Shabana explained to Daily News Egypt that, with the accumulation of deposits, the arteries are turned from being smooth and elastic to narrow and rigid, restricting the blood flow to the heart. The heart becomes unable to receive oxygen and the essential nutrients needed for the heart to pump prop-



erly. Cholesterol-containing deposits in arteries and inflammation trigger coronary artery diseases. Shabana pointed out that when



Ayman saleh



Adel Shabana

plaque builds up; the narrowing of coronary arteries decrease blood flow to heart. The reduced blood flow may trigger chest pain (angina) and shortness of breath. A complete blockage can eventually lead to a heart attack.

CAD results from damage in the inner layer of the coronary artery, and that damage, according to Shabana, may be caused by several factors including: smoking, high blood pressure, high levels of cholesterol, diabetes and insulin resistance, and an unhealthy lifestyle. Newly observed causes in Egypt include the use of Tramadol and increasing cases of obesity.

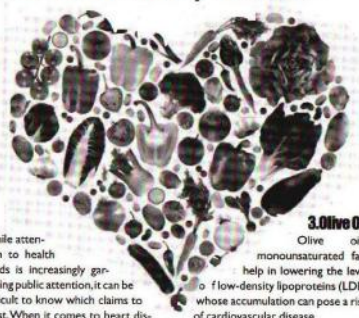
Ayman Saleh, Professor of Cardiology at the Faculty of Medicine at Ain Shams University and the chairman of the conference, emphasised the risk CAD poses to Egypt, as

it is the leading cause of death, at 45%, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Further, there has been shift in the demographic of those afflicted with CAD, with signs of the disease showing amongst a younger generation. Saleh suggested that this shift may be caused by a heightened exposure to the risk factors that cause the disease, principally high blood pressure that results from smoke inhalation and an unhealthy diet. He noted that 25% of Egyptians have high blood pressure and most are either are unaware or without access to proper medication.

Hazim Khorshid, Cardiology Consultant at Ain Shams University, highlighted the necessity of spreading awareness of the factors that cause the disease and its fatal effects.

Dietary choices that can lead to healthy hearts



While attention to health foods is increasingly garnering public attention, it can be difficult to know which claims to trust. When it comes to heart disease, knowledge of those foods that may increase or decrease the risk of wellness is vital. The Cleveland Clinic Wellness website has compiled a list of those foods that can help prevent heart disease:

1. Beans

Beans are one of the healthiest preventatives of coronary artery disease. With high levels of magnesium and potassium, they promote normal blood pressure, and their quantity of vitamins B6 and folate help to control levels of homocysteine, an amino acid whose levels are linked to inflammation of blood vessels.

2. Fish

A good source of lean protein with plenty of flavour, fish is a healthy alternative to red meat. Salmon, tuna, halibut, and sardines are rich in omega-3 acids and low in saturated fats, reducing inflammation.

3. Olive Oil
Olive oil's monounsaturated fats help in lowering the level of flow-density lipoproteins (LDL), whose accumulation can pose a risk of cardiovascular disease.

4. Nuts

One serving of mixed nuts a day is linked to a healthier level in LDLs, while also lowering the quantity of inflammatory molecules in the bloodstream.

5. Avoiding processed foods

To avoid a reliance on processed foods, incorporate whole foods into one's diet and use spices to add flavour. Helpful tips to break a reliance on processed foods include:

• With fruits and vegetables, make the colourful choice

- Fruits and vegetables provide fibre and flavour and they are full of compounds that fight heart diseases and reduce inflammation.
- Shades of brown lower sugar levels:
- Brown rice, whole-grain, bread and pastas: all of these brown foods are rich in fibre, flavour, and nutrients, without affecting your blood sugar.

Women and Coronary Artery Disease

Some research points to women being at greater risk of CAD than men

Coronary artery disease (CAD) is among of the most common conditions affecting the heart. Although CAD (also known as "coronary heart disease") affects both men and women, there is some scientific evidence suggesting that women may be at greater risk, due to female hormones and other biological differences.

According to the American Heart Association, CAD is the leading cause of death in the United States for both men and women. However, more women than men die of the condition, and more women have died of CAD than of cancer, respiratory disease, Alzheimer's disease, and accidents combined.

According to Cardio Smart, an American college of cardiology, women's risk of developing CAD is higher than that of men because they have specific risk factors for heart disease. These include pregnancy problems and certain medications, such as birth-control pills or hormone therapy.

Important women risk factors include:

Menopause

A woman's chance of getting CAD becomes higher after going through menopause. Researchers have not yet managed to explain the link in any definite way. However, the menopause generally increases cholesterol, high blood pressure, and fat surrounding the abdomen, which could be connected to increased CAD risk.

Hormone therapy (HT)



When women suffer from menopausal symptoms, including hot flashes and vaginal dryness, they might take hormone therapy to relieve these symptoms, and this may affect the risks of CAD in some cases. However, the risks vary according to the timing and duration of HT regimes, as well as whether the therapy involves oestrogen or oestrogen-plus-progestin. The various studies conducted on the topic can seem contradictory, but in general, short-term use of HT in early menopause leads to reduced risk of CAD. Meanwhile, long-term use of HT in late menopause may increase the risk of CAD.

Birth control pills:

Using birth control pills might increase the risk of CAD among women who smoke and are older

than 35, or if they have a family history of atherosclerosis or blood-clotting disorders. Healthy, young, non-smoking women have reduced risk of CAD when they take low-doses of birth control pills.

Problems related to pregnancy:

A problem during pregnancy called preeclampsia has been linked to a higher risk of CAD later in life. Experts are studying whether other pregnancy-related problems are linked to heart disease. Women should inform their doctor of any problems they may have experienced during pregnancy.

Immune diseases

Some immune-related diseases such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis have been linked with an increased risk of CAD in women.

Common risk factors for women and men

Risk factors for coronary artery disease that are common in both women and men include smoking, diabetes, obesity, lack of exercise, and family history. However, in many cases, women are more likely to develop CAD as a result of these risk factors than men.

For example, women with type-2 diabetes are twice as likely to develop CAD than male type-2 sufferers, according to a scientific statement, released recently by the American Heart Association in the journal *Circulation*.

Judith G. Regensteiner from the University of Colorado School of Medicine in Denver and chair of the statement-writing group, said cardiovascular disease may be more deadly for women with type-2 diabetes than for men. The statement said women with type-2 diabetes suffer from heart-attacks younger than men. They are also more likely to die after a first heart-attack than men and are less likely than men to undergo procedures to open clogged arteries, such as angioplasty or coronary artery bypass grafting.

The statement added that Hispanic and African-American Hispanic women with type-2 diabetes are disproportionately affected by CAD and stroke compared to men with type-2 diabetes.

While the data for the research on type-2 diabetes was gathered from patients in the United States, the findings may be particularly significant for Egypt, which has a high incidence of type-2 diabetes.