
Childhood Risk Factors That Predict Heart Attacks in Adulthood



In the world's largest international prospective cardiovascular disease study, five childhood risk factors that predict stroke and heart attacks in adulthood have been identified after being tracked for up to half a century.

The study, conducted by the International Childhood Cardiovascular Consortium (i3C) including researchers from the Murdoch Children Research Institute (MCRI), found body mass index, blood pressure, cholesterol, triglycerides, and youth smoking, particularly in combination in early childhood, were clinically linked with cardiovascular events, from as early as 40 years of age.

According to senior study author Professor Terence Dwyer, despite the effect medical and surgical care has had on treating heart disease, the major impact still depends on effective preventive strategies. This study confirms that prevention should begin in childhood. As per Prof Dwyer, studying early life influences on disease offers potential benefits to human health.

The study involved 38,589 participants from Australia, Finland and the US, who were followed from age 3-19 years for a period of 35-50 years. The research found the five risk factors, individually or in combination, present in childhood were predictors of fatal and non-fatal cardiovascular events. These include body-mass index, systolic blood pressure, total cholesterol level, triglyceride level, and youth smoking.

Professor Dwyer said "while this evidence had not been available previously, the findings were not entirely surprising as it had been known for some time that children as young as five already showed early signs of fatty deposits in arteries. This new evidence justified a greater emphasis on programmes to prevent the development of these risk factors in children. Clinicians and public health professionals should now start to focus on how this might best be achieved."

Source: [NEJM](#)

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