
Immune System Linked to Lower Heart Attack Risk



Research from the British Heart Foundation reveals that antibody levels in the blood could be used to detect a person's heart attack risk. The higher the levels of these antibodies, the lower the risk of heart attack. The research is published in *EbioMedicine*.

Coronary heart disease (CHD) is the biggest killer in the UK and the leading cause of death worldwide. Nearly 70,000 deaths in the UK are due to CHD and most deaths from CHD are caused by a heart attack.

This study was conducted by researchers at the Imperial College London and University College London. They studied patients who suffered a heart attack or stroke and measured levels of total IgG and IgM antibodies as well as levels of antibodies that are particular to an oxidised form of bad cholesterol (oxLDL).

Findings show a link between the amount of IgG antibodies in a person's blood and their likelihood of being protected against an adverse cardiac event, such as a heart attack. People with higher levels of IgG/IgM and antibodies against oxLDL were less likely to have a heart attack. IgG levels showed the strongest association with reduced heart attack risk.

IgG is the most abundant form of antibody found within our bodily fluids and protects us from bacterial and viral infections. By measuring IgG, it may be possible to accurately determine a person's risk of having a heart attack.

According to lead researcher Dr Ramzi Khamis, consultant cardiologist and Independent Clinical Research Fellow at the National Heart and Lung Institute, Imperial College London, "Linking a stronger, more robust immune system to protection from heart attacks is a really exciting finding. As well as improving the way we tell who is at the highest risk of a heart attack so that we can give them appropriate treatments, we now have a new avenue to follow in future work."

He hopes that these new findings could help explore ways of strengthening the immune system and help protect people from heart disease.

Professor Dorian Haskard, co-senior author and BHF Professor at Imperial College London, said:

"These very interesting findings linking the immune system to protection from heart disease have grown out of years of previous research funded by the British Heart Foundation. The study focused on patients under treatment for high blood pressure, and we now need to know if the link also applies to other groups at risk."

Source: [British Heart Foundation](#)

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