

Title:

Arteriosclerosis

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Summary:

Arteriosclerosis is one of the most common diseases of the blood vessels.

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Article Body:

Arteriosclerosis is one of the most common diseases of the blood vessels. It refers to a thickening of the walls of the arteries due to the presence of calcium or lime. It has become a common ailment in modern times, accounting for much of the disability and high death rate among older people.

Arteriosclerosis is usually preceded by arteriosclerosis, a kind of degeneration or softening of the inner lining of the blood vessels walls. The most risky places for such degeneration are the coronary vessels of the heart and the arteries leading to the brain. Arteriosclerosis results in a loss of elasticity of the blood vessels, with a narrowing of the smaller arteries, which interferes with the free circulation of the blood. These changes may gradually extend to capillaries and veins.

Arteriosclerosis is more frequent in men than women, especially in the younger age-group. It has been estimated that 40 per cent of all men over 40 years have a significant degree of obstruction of their coronary arteries and this can lead to heart attack at any time.

Symptoms

The symptoms of arteriosclerosis vary with arteries involved. Signs of inadequate blood supply generally appear first in the legs. There may be numbness and coldness in the feet and cramps and pains in the legs even after light exercise. If the coronary arteries are involved, the patient may have sharp pains, characteristic of angina pectoris. When arteries leading to the brain are involved, the vessel may burst, causing haemorrhage in the brain tissues. A cerebral vascular stroke, with partial or complete paralysis of one side of the body may result, if there is blockage with a blood clot. It may also lead to loss of memory and a confused state of mind in elderly people. If arteries leading to the kidneys are involved, the patient may suffer from high blood pressure and kidney disorders.

Causes

The most important cause of arteriosclerosis is excessive intake of white sugar, refined food and high fat diet, rich in cholesterol. A sedentary life and excesses of all kinds are the most contributing causes. Hardening of the arteries may also be caused by other diseases such as high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, rheumatism, Bright's disease, malaria, syphilis. Emotional stress also plays an important part, and heart attacks are more common during the periods of mental and emotional disturbances, particularly in those engaged in sedentary occupations. Heredity also plays its role and this disease runs in families.

Treatment

If the causes of arteriosclerosis are known, remedial action should be taken promptly to remove them. To begin with the patient should resort to a short juice fast for five to seven days. During this time available fresh, raw vegetables and fruit juices in season may be taken. Grape-fruit juice, pineapple juice, lemon juice and juices of green vegetables are especially beneficial. A warm water enema should be used daily to cleanse the bowels during the period of fasting. After the juice fast, the patient should take optimum diet made up from three basic food groups, namely (i) seeds, nuts and grains, (ii) vegetables and, (iii) fruits, with emphasis on raw food. Plenty of raw and sprouted seeds and nuts should be used. Cold pressed vegetable oils, particularly safflower oil, flax seed oil and olive oil should be used regularly. Further, shorter fasts on juices may be undertaken at intervals of three months or so, depending on the progress being made.

The patient should take several small meals instead of a few large ones. He should avoid all hydrogenated fats and an excess of saturated fats, such as butter, cream, ghee and animal fat.

He should also avoid meat, salt and all refined and processed foods, condiments, sauces, pickles, strong tea, coffee, white sugar, white flour and all products made from them. Food cooked in aluminum and copper utensils should not be taken as toxic metals entering the body are known to be deposited on the walls of the aorta and the arteries. Smoking, if habitual, be given up as smoking constricts the arteries and aggravates the condition.

Recent investigations have shown that garlic and onions have a preventive effect on the development of arteriosclerosis. Vitamin C has also proved beneficial as it helps in the conversion of cholesterol into bile acids.

One of the most effective home remedies for arteriosclerosis is the lemon peel. It is believed to be one of the richest known sources of vitamin P. It strengthens the entire arterial system. Shredded lemon peel may be added to soups and stews, or sprinkled over salads. To make a medicine, the peel of one or two lemons may be cut up finely, covered with warm water and allowed to stand for about 12 hours. A teaspoonful may be taken every three hours, or immediately before or after a meal.

Parsley is another effective home remedy for arteriosclerosis. It contains elements which help maintain the blood vessels, particularly the capillaries and arterial system in a healthy condition. It may be taken as a beverage by simmering it gently in the water for a few minutes and partaking several times daily.

The beet juice has also proved valuable in arteriosclerosis. It is an excellent solvent for calcium deposit. Juices of carrot and spinach are also beneficial. These juices can be taken individually or in combination. Formula proportions found helpful when used in combination are carrot 300 m.l. and spinach 200 m.l. to prepare 500 m.l. of juice.

The patient should undertake plenty of outdoor exercise and eliminate all mental stress and worries. Prolonged neutral immersion baths at bed time on alternate days is beneficial. This is administered in a bath tub which should be properly fitted with hot and cold water connections. The bath-tub should be fitted with water at a temperature ranging from 92° to 98° F and the patient should lie in it for an hour or so. The head should be kept cold with a cold compress.

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