

Heart Disease Observed in Obese Children



Signs of cardiovascular disease typically seen in middle-aged adults were observed in obese children, according to the findings of a recent study, presented at the Canadian Cardiovascular Congress last month.

Researchers took measures of blood pressure, lipids and BMI from 63 obese children and compared them with that of 55 children of normal weight. The mean age of participants was 13 years. According to Kevin Harris, from the department of pediatrics, BC Children's Hospital, in Vancouver it appeared as if the aging process had been accelerated in the children's aorta, and it was surprising to find that these obese children already have stiff blood vessels, which is an early indicator of cardiovascular disease in obese children. He said these findings are highly significant because the elastic qualities of their aorta were impaired, even though other measures of heart health such as blood lipid levels and blood pressure were not dramatically different. However, an ultrasound of the heart, showed that the pulse wave velocity and other measures of arterial health were already abnormal in the obese children.

The next step should be to determine whether these changes are reversible with treatment such as improved diet and exercise, and this test may eventually be helpful in monitoring the progression of cardiovascular disease in children and young adults.

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