



To News Editor
For Immediate Release

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CUHK Discovers Type D Personality is Highly Associated with Coronary Heart Disease

Coronary heart disease is a global pandemic. It is caused by the narrowing of the arteries that supply blood to the heart. When these arteries are occluded, it will result in dangerous conditions such as acute chest pain (unstable angina) and heart attack (myocardial infarction). In Hong Kong, coronary heart disease is one of the leading causes of hospital admission, with the crude death rate reported as 70 for male and 55.5 for female per 100,000 population of respective sex in 2007. Management of coronary heart disease relies on effective medical treatment, stenting procedure of the diseased vessel by catheter approach, as well as identification and control of the risk factors.

Whereas there is an increased public awareness on the lifestyle-related risk factors to this disease, little attention has been paid to the role of personality on the disease progression. Recently, a new personality trait has been introduced, called “Type D personality”. The “D” stands for “distressed”. Type D personality refers to a trait characterized by two typical features: i) the tendency to experience negative affections such as worries, irritability and gloom (Negative Affectivity), and ii) the tendency to inhibit self-expression in social interaction with a lack of self-assurance (Social Inhibition). People with this personality trait tend to be more hostile, anxious and have a negative view. They also tend to overreact to stressful circumstances and feel insecure and uncomfortable in group settings. In the Western population, the prevalence of Type D personality among patients with coronary heart disease varies from 18% to 53%. These studies showed that Type D personality was associated with a 5-8 fold increased risk of myocardial infarction (heart attack) and a 4-fold increased risk of mortality. However, there is no such data in the Asian population.

Professor Yu Cheuk-man of Division of Cardiology, Department of Medicine & Therapeutics and Institute of Vascular Medicine at CUHK; Professor Doris Yu of The Nethersole School of Nursing at CUHK and Professor Johan Denollet of Department of Psychology and Health at Tilburg University in Belgium who developed Type D personality jointly conducted a study to determine the implications of Type D personality in patients with coronary heart disease in Hong Kong. This study was conducted in a form of a questionnaire consisting of 14 questions. The study screened a total of 326 Chinese adult patients with coronary heart disease (217 male and 109 female, with mean age at 67 years old) from November 2006 to January 2008. Results showed that 31% of patients have Type D personality.

We also found that Type D personality exhibited adverse psychosocial risk factors which may accelerate coronary heart disease. Among patients with Type D personality, 13% had clinical anxiety and 43% had clinical depression, which is dramatically more common than those without Type D personality that only affected 1.4% and 17% of patients respectively. Furthermore, patients with Type D personality possessed more neurotic behaviors and reported more stress-related symptoms such as insomnia, epigastric pain, back pain and headache. They also exhibited more social alienation in interacting with others. It is postulated that Type D personality adversely affects the neurohormonal and immune systems, and thus worsens coronary heart disease.

In conclusion, Type D personality is prevalent in Chinese patients with coronary heart disease. We recommend health care professionals to adopt screening assessment of Type D personality in patients with coronary heart disease. For such patients, specific treatment approaches such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, interpersonal psychotherapy and social skill training should be considered to better control the common psychosocial risk factors of coronary heart disease.



致新聞編輯
請即發放

中大發現D型性格可導致冠心病

冠心病正威脅著全球人類的健康。它的成因是輸送血液至心臟的動脈血管(冠狀動脈)收窄，當動脈血管栓塞，便會引發急性心絞痛(不穩定型心絞痛)和心臟病突發(心肌梗塞)。在香港，冠心病是導致入院的主要原因之一。據 2007 年統計，每 100,000 人口中，就分別約有 70 名男性及 55.5 名女性因冠心病而死亡。要有效控制冠心病，主要是靠藥物治療、導管介入技術、以及識別和控制高風險因素。

雖然現時市民已逐漸關注到冠心病與生活模式有密切關係，唯卻忽略了性格對冠心病病發的影響。最近，心理學家發現了一種新的性格特徵，稱為「D型性格」。「D」是指「憂傷型(Distressed)」。D型性格擁有兩種特性：i)傾向出現負面情緒，例如憂慮、易怒和陰沉(負面情緒作用)；ii)在社交活動中，傾向自我抑制及缺乏自信(社交壓抑)。具此性格特徵的人常對人懷有敵意、感到焦慮及態度消極。當他們面對壓力時，會作出過分的反應。另外，在群體相處時，他們會感到侷促不安和渾身不自在。在西方國家，在患有冠心病患者中有 18%-53% 患者同時具有 D 型性格。外國研究亦發現，D 型性格者的心肌梗塞發病率會增加 5 至 8 倍，死亡風險則增加 4 倍。至於亞洲人口中，則尚未有相關的數據。

有見及此，香港中文大學(中大)就冠心病患者同時具有 D 型性格進行了一項研究。該研究在 2006 年 11 月至 2008 年 1 月期間進行，共有 326 名華裔成年冠心病患者參予(男性有 217 人，女性有 109 人，平均年齡為 67 歲)，由中大內科及藥物治療學系心臟科主任、心腦血管醫學研究所所長(臨床醫學)余卓文教授、中大那打素護理學院余秀鳳副教授及 D 型性格始創者 Professor Johan Denollet 共同策劃。參加者需填寫一份共有 14 條問題的 D 型性格測試問卷，以了解他們是否具有 D 型性格。結果顯示，在這些冠心病患者中，有 31% 具 D 型性格。

研究亦發現，D 型性格會引發一連串不良心理及社交反應，而這些反應早已被確定為加速冠心病惡化的危險因素。另外，具 D 型性格的冠心病患者中，有 13% 出現焦慮和 43% 出現抑鬱的情緒；相反，非 D 型性格的病患者則分別只有 1.4% 及 17%。此外，D 型性格病患者出現較多神經過敏行為，及出現與壓力相關的徵狀如失眠、胃痛、背痛和頭痛。他們在與人相處上亦表現疏離及不合群。基於以上研究結果，可以推斷 D 型性格對冠心病患者的神經荷爾蒙和免疫系統造成不良影響，令冠心病病情惡化。

總括而言，D 型性格常見於華裔冠心病患者。故此，中大建議醫護人員為冠心病患者進行 D 型性格評估，作出針對性的預防和治療方案，亦可採用如認知行為治療、人際關係心理治療及社交技能訓練，藉以控制冠心病風險。

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