



To News Editor
For Immediate Release

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CUHK Proves Homocysteine is Highly Associated with Stroke

The World Stroke Organization proclaims the World Stroke Day 2009 to be on 29 October. The slogan of this year is 'Stroke – What can I do?' Stroke is the third most common cause of death worldwide and is the leading cause of disability in adults. It is a complex disease with multiple causes, among which the major risk factors are high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol and smoking. Adequate control of risk factors, which can be achieved by adopting a healthy lifestyle or by medications, is important in stroke prevention.

In recent years, researchers have identified a novel stroke risk factor called homocysteine, which is a derivative of an amino acid absorbed from diet. Since 2002, a research team led by Professor Vincent Mok, Associate Professor of the Division of Neurology of the Department of Medicine and Therapeutics, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), has investigated the relationship between homocysteine and stroke. The team followed up 75 stroke patients for 5 years and found that those with high levels of homocysteine had an 8-fold increased risks of having recurrent strokes compared to those with normal levels of homocysteine. It was also proved that homocysteine is associated with the development of white matter lesions, a disease of the small arteries in the brain.

In another study involving 94 patients in 2004, it was also found that white matter lesions increase the risk of cognitive impairment. Furthermore, overseas research results have consistently shown that white matter lesions are associated with dementia, depression, falls and urinary incontinence commonly reported in the elderly.

High homocysteine level can be lowered by taking vitamins B6, B12 and folate supplementation. There are evidences showing that vitamins supplementation can prevent stroke in 1 in every 4 persons. However, a more economical and simple way to achieve a good level of these vitamins is to maintain a healthy lifestyle and diet, which will also exert positive impacts on other stroke risk factors.

A balanced and healthy diet with adequate fruits and vegetables, skim milk, beans and bean products, lean meat and fishes will provide the amount required to prevent deficiency of vitamins B6, B12 and folate. Vegetarians who do not take milk, milk products, eggs or fishes may require vitamin B12 supplementation. Besides, a diet rich in fibre, especially water soluble fibre, low in fat, especially saturated fat, and low in sodium will lower the risk of high cholesterol and hypertension which are the other risk factors of stroke. Apart from taking less fat, a lower intake of sugar and sugary foods also helps to prevent obesity, which is another risk factor of stroke.

Stroke is preventable. Everybody, including you and me, can maintain a healthy lifestyle to prevent stroke.



致新聞編輯
請即發放

中大研究證實半胱胺酸與中風有密切關係

世界中風組織早前宣佈將今天（10月29日）定為2009世界中風日，口號是「中風 — 我可以做甚麼？」。中風是全球第三大的致死原因，也是引致成人殘障的主因，其病發成因非常複雜。高血壓、糖尿病、高膽固醇及吸煙都是發病的高危因素。透過控制高風險因素、保持良好的生活習慣和服食藥物，皆有助預防中風。

近年，醫學界發現一種從食物中攝取的氨基酸衍生物 — 半胱胺酸，是導致中風的其中一個高風險因素。自2002年起，香港中文大學（中大）內科及藥物治療學系腦神經科副教授莫仲棠教授率領的研究團隊，一直研究半胱胺酸與中風的關係。研究人員在五年內跟進了75名中風病人，發現病人體內的半胱胺酸濃度愈高，其再次中風的機會會增加8倍；而半胱胺酸與腦白質病變（即腦內小血管病變）亦有關連。

另一項2004年的研究，有94名病人參與，結果發現腦白質病變可導致認知功能障礙。根據外國研究顯示，腦白質病變與癡呆、抑鬱、跌傷及失禁等常見的老人健康問題有密切關係。

透過攝取維他命B6、B12及葉酸，可有助減低體內半胱胺酸的濃度。現時有證據證實，若能適當補充維他命，每4人中就有1人可避免中風；而保持良好的生活習慣及維持均衡飲食為補充維他命的一個既經濟又簡單的方法。

均衡的飲食習慣包括進食適量的水果及蔬菜、脫脂奶、大豆及豆類製品、瘦肉及魚類等，為身體提供足夠的維他命。素食者若不進食奶類、奶類製品、雞蛋及魚類則需要補充維他命B12。另外，若吸收豐富纖維（特別是水溶性纖維）及維持低脂（特別是飽和脂肪）、低鹽的飲食習慣，可預防高膽固醇及高血壓。除了進食低脂食物外，減少進食糖份及甜食均可防止癡肥，減低中風風險。

中風是可以預防的，每個人 — 包括你和我，都可以維持健康的生活模式去預防中風。

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