

Economy-class syndrome caused by sitting

May 18 2006

Sitting for long periods, rather than low air pressure and reduced oxygen on airplanes, may be the cause of lethal blood clots, a British study has found.

After simulating cabin conditions on an eight-hour flight, including low air pressure and reduced oxygen, British scientists found no increase in blood clotting among healthy people, The Times reported Thursday.

The study into what causes deep vein thrombosis, which kills thousands of people yearly, suggests the clotting is not a result of circumstances unique to flying but is mainly caused by sitting down for too long in a confined space.

The research highlights the danger of any travel that involves long periods of inactivity, including long car or train rides.

Deep vein thrombosis, popularly known as "economy-class syndrome," is a condition in which a small blood clot forms, usually in the deep veins of the legs. It can cause death if part of the clot breaks off and blocks a blood vessel in the lungs.

"It is another piece in the jigsaw," Dr William Toff of the University of Leicester, who headed the study, said of the findings, which were published in this week's Journal of the American Medical Association.

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