

No link between acid reflux and survival

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Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), often known as acid reflux, is a common problem that has been associated with cancers, asthma, recurrent aspiration and pulmonary fibrosis. A new study published in *The American Journal of Gastroenterology* examines whether GERD sufferers may have shorter lifespans than those without the disease.

Drawing on over 50,000 person-years of data, the study provides reassuring evidence that people with acid reflux symptoms do not have an increased risk of death, finding no difference in survival rates between sufferers and non-sufferers.

In fact, the study finds that people with infrequent acid reflux may actually have better survival rates than those with either daily symptoms, or none at all. “It may be that occasional reflux symptoms are a reflection of potential protective behaviors that are associated with reflux, such as regular exercise or modest amounts of alcohol ingestion,” suggest Nicholas J. Talley and G. Richard Locke, III, co-authors of the study.

The study adds perspective to the risk of acid reflux symptoms. While there are a large number of acid reflux sufferers in the U.S., incidences of related cancer are extremely rare. “Although extraesophageal manifestations occur in some people with reflux disease, our results suggest that this disease is a benign condition in the vast majority of sufferers,” say the authors.

Source: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

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