

Longitudinal Study Confirms High Sodium/Low Potassium Levels Increase Cardiovascular Disease

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Epidemiologist and CEO of Loyola University Health Systems, Paul K. Whelton, MB, MD, MSc and Senior author of the study known as Trials of Hypertension has found potassium is linked to lower blood pressure. Most importantly, the risk of cardiovascular disease is increased by some 50-percent for participants with high sodium-to-potassium ratio than their counterparts with high levels of potassium and lower levels of sodium.

The study confirms other reports and letters by hypertension experts and covered by PHYSorg in [Cardiovascular Disease and Diet](#).

The longitudinal study involved taking urine samples intermittently over a 24 hour period for 18-months and a second trial urine sample during a 36-month period. Over 2,970 patients ranging in age from 30 to 54 years were tested and followed for 10-15 years. The patients all had blood pressure readings during the testing phase just under levels that are considered high.

In the follow-up evaluations, it was found that the patients with the highest sodium-to-potassium ratio were 50-percent more likely to experience cardiovascular disease than participants with the lowest sodium-to -potassium levels.

According to Dr. Whelton, "There isn't as much focus on potassium, but

potassium seems to be effective in lowering blood pressure and the combination of a higher intake of potassium and lower consumption of sodium seems to be more effective than either on its own in reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease." The longitudinal study suggests strongly that increasing potassium combined with reducing sodium intake is an inseparable team in preventing heart disease and treating high blood pressure.

More information: *Archives of Internal Medicine*, January 2009, archinte.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/short/169/1/32

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