

Dentists can help to identify patients at risk of a heart attack

November 25 2009

Dentists can help to identify patients who are in danger of dying of a heart attack or stroke, reveals a new study from the Sahlgrenska Academy. Thanks to the study, six men who thought they were completely healthy were able to start preventive treatment in time.

"Dentists are really proud of their profession and feel no need to encroach upon doctors' territory," says senior dental officer and professor Mats Jontell at the Sahlgrenska Academy. "However, we wanted to find out if we as a profession could identify patients at risk of cardiovascular disease."

The study involved 200 men and women over the age of 45 who did not have any known cardiovascular problems. During a routine visit to their normal dentists in Borl's and Gothenburg they were also checked out for known risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

"These risk factors are not normally manifested in the mouth, which is why the dentists went beyond their normal check-up routine," says Jontell. "They also took the patients' blood pressure and checked total cholesterol and blood sugar levels."

The risk of a fatal cardiovascular disease was calculated using a software known as HeartScore. The dentists felt that twelve men had a ten per cent risk of developing a fatal [cardiovascular disease](#) over the next ten years and advised them to see their [doctors](#). Six of the twelve were subsequently prescribed medication to lower their blood pressure.

"Dentists regularly see a very large percentage of the Swedish population, and if there is sufficient interest they could also screen for cardiovascular risk factors which, untreated, could lead to a [heart attack](#) or [stroke](#)," says Jontell.

More information: *J Am Dent Assoc* 2009; 140; 1385-1391

Source: University of Gothenburg ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Dentists can help to identify patients at risk of a heart attack (2009, November 25) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-11-dentists-patients-heart.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.