

Atherosclerotic disease heredity mapped in nationwide study

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Researchers at Lund University in Sweden have mapped the significance of heredity for common forms of atherosclerotic disease. No studies have previously examined whether different forms of the disease share heredity.

The study looked at coronary heart disease, [ischemic stroke](#), peripheral arterial disease and atherosclerosis of the aorta in individuals whose siblings and parents have suffered different types of cardiovascular disease.

The results showed that heredity is highest for atherosclerosis of the aorta followed by [peripheral arterial disease](#), [coronary heart disease](#) and lastly stroke. The risk is highest of developing the same type of atherosclerotic disease as one's sibling or parent.

Atherosclerosis of the aorta stood out from the other forms of atherosclerotic disease; the risk of developing atherosclerosis of the aorta at a young age – under 55 for men and under 65 for women – was nine times higher for individuals with a parent who has suffered from early atherosclerosis of the aorta than for those who did not have this family history.

"If you know that one of your parents developed atherosclerosis of the aorta at a young age, you should arrange to have an [ultrasound examination](#) of the [aorta](#)", said Reader Bengt Zöller.

The results form an important guide for the importance of hereditary factors for different forms of atherosclerotic disease.

"The presence of cardiovascular disease in a parent or sibling is an important risk factor that should be included in patients' medical history and examinations. It is therefore important that doctors ask about family history so that they can decide whether further examinations are needed", said Susanna Calling.

Provided by Lund University

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