Herpes simplex virus linked to frailty, mortality

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(HealthDay)—For older women, herpes simplex virus antibody levels

are associated with incident frailty and mortality, according to a study published online April 30 in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

George C. Wang, M.D., Ph.D., from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, and colleagues conducted a nested prospective cohort study involving 633 community-dwelling older women aged 70 to 79 years. The authors examined baseline serum antibody levels against herpes simplex virus 1 (HSV-1) and 2 (HSV-2), varicella-zoster virus, and Epstein-Barr virus; they also measured three-year incident frailty and five-year mortality.

The researchers found that the risk of three-year incident frailty was increased for women seropositive for HSV-1 (hazard ratio [HR], 1.90; 95 percent confidence interval [CI], 0.96 to 3.74) and HSV-2 (HR, 2.10; 95 percent CI, 1.05 to 4.37) versus seronegative women; five-year mortality was also increased for HSV-1 (HR, 1.73; 95 percent CI, 0.93 to 3.20) and HSV-2 (HR, 1.80; 95 percent CI, 0.94 to 3.44). There was a correlation for incremental increases in HSV-1 and HSV-2 antibody levels with increased risks of incident frailty and mortality. Only higher serum HSV-2 antibody levels were independently predictive of higher mortality risk in older women, after adjustment for potential confounders (HR, 1.47; 95 percent CI, 1.05 to 2.07).

"HSV-1 and HSV-2 antibody levels are associated with unadjusted risks of incident frailty and mortality in community-dwelling older women," the authors write.

More information: Abstract
Full Text (subscription or payment may be required)