Male-pattern baldness and premature graying associated with risk of early heart disease

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Male-pattern baldness and premature greying are associated with a more than fivefold risk of heart disease before the age of 40 years, according to research presented at the 69th Annual Conference of the Cardiological Society of India (CSI). Obesity was associated with a fourfold risk of early heart disease.

The congress is being held in Kolkata, India, from 30 November to 3 December. Experts from the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) will present a special programme.1

"The incidence of coronary artery disease in young men is increasing but cannot be explained by traditional risk factors," said author Dr Sachin Patil, a third year resident at the U.N. Mehta Institute of Cardiology and Research Centre, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India. "Premature greying and androgenic alopecia (male-pattern baldness) correlate well with vascular age irrespective of chronological age and are plausible risk factors for coronary artery disease."

This study investigated the association of premature hair greying and alopecia patterns in young Indian men with coronary artery disease. The study included 790 men aged less than 40 years with coronary artery disease and 1 270 age-matched healthy men who acted as a control group.
All participants had a clinical history taken, electrocardiogram (ECG), echocardiography, blood tests, and coronary angiogram. Participants were given a male-pattern baldness score of 0 (none), 1 (mild), 2 (moderate), or 3 (severe) after analysis of 24 different views of the scalp. A hair whitening score was determined according to the percentage of grey/white hairs: 1: pure black; 2: black greater than white; 3: black equals white; 4: white greater than black; 5: pure white.

The researchers analysed the correlation between premature grey hair and alopecia with the complexity and severity of angiographic lesions (an indicator of coronary artery disease) and compared the results between the two groups.

The researchers found that young men with coronary artery disease had a higher prevalence of premature greying (50% versus 30%) and male-pattern baldness (49% versus 27%) compared to healthy controls. After adjusting for age and other cardiovascular risk factors, male-pattern baldness was associated with a 5.6 times greater risk of coronary artery disease (95% confidence interval [CI] 4.0-7.8, p


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