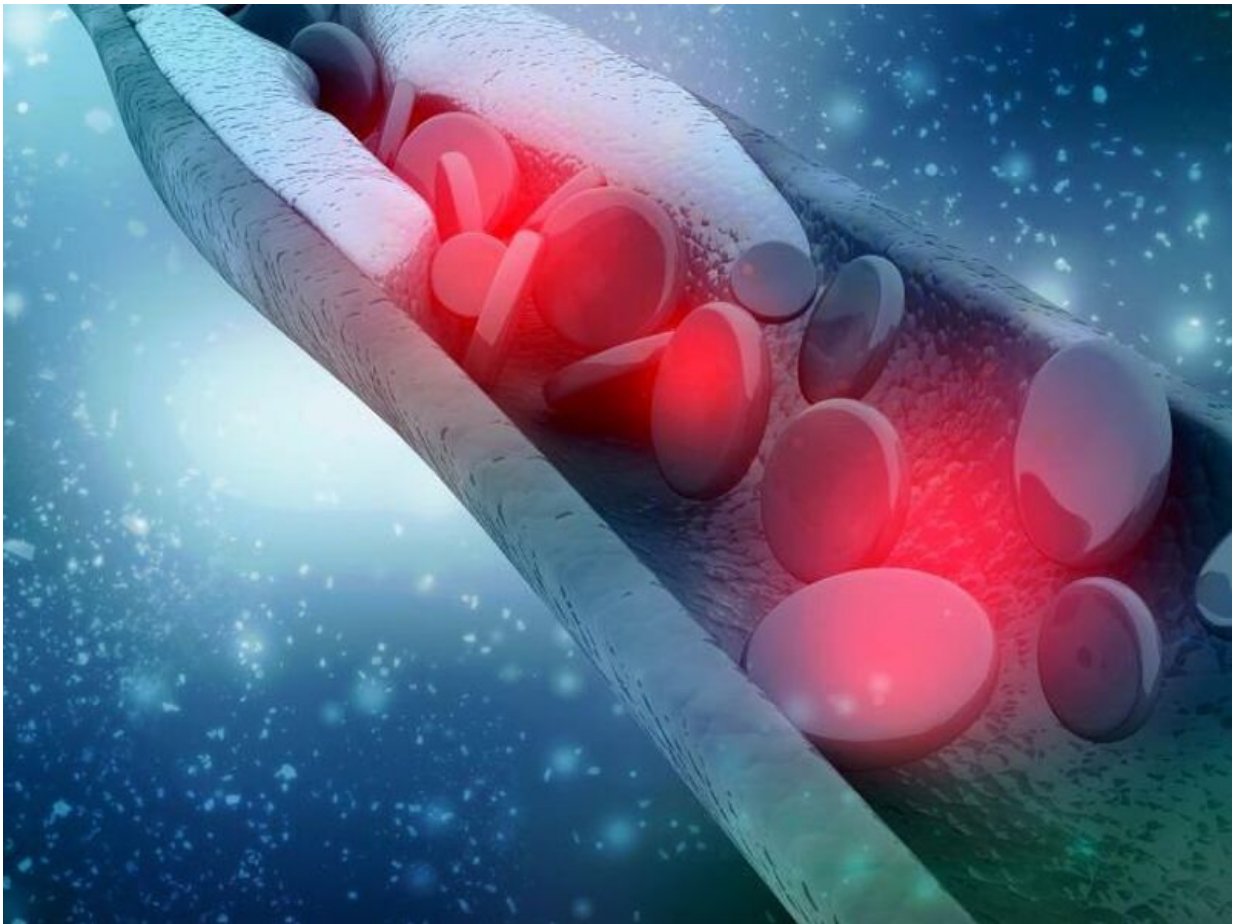


Similar processes could link multiple sclerosis with heart disease

March 22 2023, by Cara Murez



Multiple sclerosis (MS) and atherosclerosis both involve an abnormal

hardening of body tissue, and recent research suggests they may be linked.

MS is a neurodegenerative disease that attacks the brain and [spinal cord](#). Atherosclerosis is hardening of the arteries.

Studies show connections between the two, according to Ochsner Health System in New Orleans. In 2018, a team of Romanian researchers led by [Dr. Raluca Ileana Mincu](#) of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy Carol Davila, Bucharest, used state-of-the-art echocardiography to conduct [heart](#) and vascular assessments in patients with MS.

[The exams](#), which show how blood flows through the heart and valves, found that MS patients had more impairments on both sides of the heart compared to healthy people.

A more [recent study](#) followed more than 84,000 people for 10 years, comparing heart health in participants with and without MS. People with MS were 50% more likely to die from [heart disease](#), researchers found. They were 28% more likely to have a [heart attack](#) and 59% more likely to have a stroke. [Raffaele Palladino](#) of Imperial College London led the study.

The findings highlight the importance of comprehensive heart exams for people with MS. Advanced techniques can help prevent life-threatening heart disease in patients who are at high risk.

This preliminary research doesn't show that MS causes atherosclerosis, but a strong association between the two diseases is emerging, according to Ochsner Health.

More studies are needed to understand the underlying processes that link these two conditions.

In atherosclerosis, [fatty deposits](#) build up in the arteries, causing a thickening of the blood vessel wall, curtailing [blood flow](#). As a result, lower levels of oxygen and important nutrients are able to reach various parts of the body.

A chronic condition, it can lead to [coronary artery disease](#), angina, peripheral artery disease and kidney problems.

Causes aren't fully known, according to the American Heart Association, but elevated cholesterol and triglycerides in the blood, high blood pressure, cigarette smoking and diabetes are risk factors.

In MS, the body's immune system mistakenly attacks its own central nervous system. This interrupts nerve signals between the brain and spinal cord and other parts of the body, leading to hardened scar tissue after each attack.

About 1 million U.S. adults live with MS. Symptoms can include impaired vision, sensory changes, cognitive changes, weakness, pain, fatigue, bowel and bladder incontinence, impaired coordination and walking difficulties, according to the National MS Society.

More information: The U.S. National Institutes of Health has more on [atherosclerosis](#), and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society has more on [MS](#).

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