Medical Xpress

Chinese suffer aches and pains too

February 1 2008

We like to complain about our aches and pains, but rheumatism is not only the preserve of western society. A comprehensive survey of rheumatic diseases in China, published in the open access journal Arthritis Research & Therapy, reveals that rheumatic complaints are also common in China. The survey suggests that the incidence of certain rheumatic diseases in the Chinese population is now becoming more like that of Western countries.

This latest survey is the first of its kind, using data compiled from 38 previously published studies covering over 240,000 adults from 25 provinces and cities. It shows that the prevalence of osteoarthritis (OA) in China is similar to other Asian Pacific and western countries. However, rheumatic diseases in the Chinese appear to affect different sites than that of Caucasian populations. The sites of complaint tended to be the lumbar spine, knee joint and cervical spine, whereas Caucasian populations tend to suffer OA more in the hips and hands. The prevalence of ankylosing spondylitis in China was also similar to Caucasians and similarly linked to certain genetic markers.

The study also shows that elderly people in the north of China suffer the most from these painful and chronic joint complaints including osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. The prevalence of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) in mainland China ranged from 0.2% to 0.37%, a prevalence similar to most Asian and South American countries, but lower than that in Caucasians.

“Interestingly, we found that the prevalence of rheumatoid arthritis in

urban and suburban parts of Taiwan was closer to the Caucasians rate," says Dr Qing Yu Zeng who led the study. "These areas are more developed than mainland China. Apart from genetic factors, it looks as if environmental and socio-economic factors might be important risk factors for RA. That's something we'd certainly like to investigate further."

The survey also looked into a number of rarer rheumatic conditions and found evidence that certain ethnic groups might be more susceptible than others.

Source: BioMed Central

Citation: Chinese suffer aches and pains too (2008, February 1) retrieved 24 April 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2008-02-chinese-aches-pains.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.