

# Genes, binge drinking, stress behind surging heart-related deaths in young adults

A poor lifestyle with lack of sleep, binge drinking, and high stress, coupled with genes, is playing a significant role in the rising heart-related deaths in India, said experts on Saturday.

Recently, an increasing number of heart-related deaths have been reported in the country. These have also been among people who are seemingly fit and are maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

“Not all can be called heart attacks. About 20 per cent of the heart-related deaths in India are because of certain genes,” said Dr Rajiv Bhal, Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

He also blamed “binge drinking (alcohol) among the younger generation, silent hypertension, increasing stress, and a



lack of proper sleep, as well as childhood obesity” for the surge in heart-related deaths.

Further, he stressed that heavy exercise in gyms, especially by people with faulty genes, can contribute to heart-related deaths.

Bhal also suggested six things for good health: “healthy physical activity, no smoking, better sleep, proper diet, reduc-

ing stress, and doing some kind of meditation”.

Dr. J.P.S. Sawhney, Chairperson of Cardiology at a leading hospital in the national capital, stated the two genetic causes that are highly prevalent and linked to cardiovascular disease in India -- familial hypercholesterolemia and elevated lipoprotein(a).

The global prevalence of familial hypercholesterolemia is approximately 1 in 250. In India, it is responsible for heart attacks below the age of 40 in 15 per cent of cases. On the other hand, elevated lipoprotein(a) is present in 25 per cent of the general population in India.

“We have observed that elevated lipoprotein(a) levels -- above 50 mg/dL

-- are common in young heart attack patients and are directly linked to the severity of coronary artery disease,” the noted cardiologist told IANS. Sawhney explained that the diagnosis of familial hypercholesterolemia is ideally done by genetic testing.

“However, since this is not easily available in most parts of the country, we use the Dutch Lipid Clinical Network (DLCN) Criteria for diagnosis. The importance of diagnosing familial hypercholesterolemia lies in not only identifying the index patient but also performing cascade screening of siblings and their children by checking fasting lipid profiles,” he said. If the cholesterol level is high, we consider them carriers and start treatment early in life -- as

early as two years of age -- to lower cholesterol levels. Otherwise, these patients are at high risk of developing premature heart attacks. By performing cascade screening, we can prevent premature heart attacks in patients with familial hypercholesterolemia, the cardiologist told IANS.

In the case of elevated lipoprotein(a), there is currently no specific treatment for it.

“We are awaiting the results of ongoing trials on a special group of drugs, expected in 2026, which may provide targeted therapy. At present, for those with high lipoprotein(a) -- more than 50 mg/dL -- we recommend aggressive control of other risk factors such as diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol,” the expert said.

## Are Vitamins Actually Harming Your Body? Nutritionist Explains How

Hydration is the key to good health. Pooja Makhija, author of the best-selling book Eat Delete and celebrity nutritionist, recently shared a video addressing whether vitamin intake on a regular basis harms the body. She also explains what happens when you don't drink water in a proper quantity, highlighting a few unique nutritional hacks to deal with the situation. In the clip, she asks, “Are your vitamins actually harming your body?” further adding, “Well, without enough water, they just might be. Let me explain why. Having ample water with your vitamins is not an option. It is crucial for your health.” As per Pooja Makhija, these are the major problems related to the con-

sumption of water along with vitamins:

She says, “A cereal dose of vitamins requires anywhere between 250-300 ml of water- a regular glass of water. But if you are having multiple vitamins at one time, you may require anywhere between 350-400 ml of water to absorb them effectively.”

According to the nutritionist, water-soluble vitamins such as B-complex and Vitamin C require water for optimal absorption into the intestine.

She then cites the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition and shares, “A study showed that when you drink less water, it affects the rate of absorption and also may call oesophageal irritation.”

Another study published



in the Nutrition Research Review found that taking iron and calcium or taking vitamins with less water irritates the stomach and may also cause constipation.

In Pooja Makhija's words: “Now, while fat-soluble vitamins do require a fatty diet to be absorbed, they also require water to transport to the digestive system. When you drink less water, it causes gastrointestinal discomfort and fishy burps—remember that!”

She suggests, “So, next time you take your vitamins, don't take them with just a sip of water. Drink ample water, and don't skimp on the quantity.” “Taking vitamins without enough water can lead to poor absorption, stomach irritation, or worse—completely wasted benefits. Remember: Hydration isn't just about quenching thirst—it's about helping your body work smarter, not harder,” she writes in the video's caption.

## Study claims paracetamol may not be safe during pregnancy

While paracetamol or acetaminophen has long remained the first choice of painkiller in pregnancy, a new study claims it may lead to neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs), such as autism and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in babies.

Acetaminophen is the most commonly used over-the-counter medication taken during pregnancy, with more than 50 per cent of pregnant women using the drug worldwide. It is widely used for headaches, pain, or fever by pregnant women.

Researchers from the universities of Massachusetts and Harvard analysed 46 studies that incorporated data from more than 100,000 people. Of these, 27 studies reported significant links to NDDs.

“The majority of the studies reported positive associations of prenatal acetaminophen use with ADHD,

ASD, or NDDs in offspring,” said corresponding author Andrea A. Baccarelli from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Acetaminophen is known to cross the placental barrier and may trigger oxidative stress, disrupt hor-



mones, and cause epigenetic changes that interfere with foetal brain development, which may explain the links, the researcher said.

Prior literature has also shared the potential link between acetaminophen and neurodevelopmental disorders.

A 2017 study indicated a higher risk for ADHD among mothers who used acetaminophen for 22 to 28 days. Another study published in February also suggested that acetaminophen exposure increased the odds for ADHD -- although only in girls.

The study noted that although acetaminophen remains the preferred painkiller due to its relatively favorable safety profile compared to other medications, its use should be approached judiciously, particularly in light of potential implications for foetal development during the perinatal period.

“Appropriate and immediate steps should be taken to advise pregnant women to limit acetaminophen consumption to protect their offspring's neurodevelopment,” Baccarelli said, while also urging the need for more studies to ascertain the risk.

## Lung Cancer Awareness Month 2024: Theme, History, Significance & Tips To Reduce Risk

Lung Cancer Awareness Month is observed each November to raise awareness about lung cancer, promote screening, and support ongoing research and advocacy. Organised by various organisations worldwide, it serves as a platform to inform people about lung cancer's risk factors, symptoms, and treatment options. Through various events, social media campaigns, and outreach programs, the month emphasises the importance of early detection, which significantly increases survival rates. As one of the most common cancers globally, lung cancer affects millions of individuals and families, and Lung Cancer Awareness Month brings these people together in a collective fight against the disease.

Theme The 2024 theme for Lung Cancer Awareness Month is “Stronger Together: United for Lung Cancer Awareness.” This theme emphasises the vital role of community support and collaboration in the fight against lung cancer.

History Lung Cancer Awareness Month was officially recognised in the early 2000s, driven by organisations such as the American Lung Association and the Lung Cancer Foundation of America. Advocacy groups and medical professionals pushed for greater attention to lung cancer, a disease often overshadowed by other types of cancer. Originally a week-long observance, it expanded to a full month as awareness grew, allowing for a more comprehensive approach to public education and policy advocacy. The movement gained momentum as survivors, advocates, and loved ones of those affected by lung cancer united to reduce the stigma associated with the disease and to call for increased funding for research.

Significance The significance of Lung Cancer Awareness Month lies in its role as a powerful

awareness-building and support campaign. Lung cancer is often diagnosed at advanced stages, where treatment options are more limited, so early screening awareness is critical. The observance encourages people, especially those at higher risk, to get screened, learn the symptoms, and adopt lifestyle changes that can reduce their risk.

Additionally, Lung Cancer Awareness Month helps to fight the stigma associated with the disease. Many associate lung cancer primarily with smoking, yet the disease affects non-smokers as well.

Tips to reduce the risk of lung cancer Quitting smoking at any age can significantly reduce lung cancer risk. Nicotine replacement therapies, counselling, and support groups can assist in quitting. Exposure Radon, a naturally occurring radioactive gas, can build up in homes and workplaces and is a major cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

Certain chemicals, such as asbestos and diesel exhaust, are known to increase lung cancer risk. A diet high in antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals helps to protect the body from cancer.

Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week, such as brisk walking or cycling.

Limiting alcohol consumption can contribute to lower cancer risk.

While avoiding air pollution completely isn't possible, limiting outdoor activities on days with high pollution levels and using air purifiers indoors can help.

A family history of lung cancer can elevate your risk. Being aware of this risk factor allows you to take preventive steps.

By adopting these preventive measures and making lifestyle changes, individuals can help reduce their lung cancer risk and contribute to the goals of Lung Cancer Awareness Month in promoting a healthier, well-informed community.

## How Sweet Potatoes Support Heart Health and Anti-Cancer Properties

How Sweet Potatoes Support Heart Health and Anti-Cancer Properties Sweet potatoes are a heart-healthy and cancer-protective food due to their nutrient-rich profile. Sweet potatoes are highly nutritious and beneficial for regular consumption due to their rich nutrient profile. They are an excellent source of dietary fibre, vitamins (notably vitamin A in the form of beta-carotene), potassium, and antioxidants, while being low in fat and calories. Regular consumption supports

various health benefits, such as improved digestion, enhanced immune function, and better blood sugar regulation due to their low glycemic index. Along with these benefits, they have also seen to show benefits to heart health and have anti-cancer properties. Read on as we discuss these benefits. How can sweet potatoes support heart health?

Sweet potatoes are a heart-friendly food due to their rich nutrient profile that promotes cardiovascular well-being. One of their standout compo-

nents is potassium, a mineral essential for maintaining healthy blood pressure levels. Potassium works by balancing sodium levels in the body, reducing water retention, and relaxing blood vessel walls. This mechanism helps lower the risk of hypertension, a significant factor in heart disease. By replacing high-sodium foods with potassium-rich sweet potatoes, individuals can improve their cardiovascular health naturally. Additionally, sweet potatoes are an excellent

source of dietary fibre, which plays a crucial role in reducing levels of LDL cholesterol (often referred to as “bad cholesterol”). High LDL levels can lead to plaque buildup in the arteries, increasing the risk of atherosclerosis and heart attacks. Fibre also improves overall lipid profiles, contributing to better heart health.

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## EDUCATION PLUS

### Brighter opportunity in Career Options in Advertising



#### Advertising & Marketing Communications

There is perhaps, no other business that so greatly influences our daily lives. Advertising dictates our choices regarding cars we drive, our drinking preferences, or our clothes, it is a great influence on our daily lives.

#### Work

Advertising offers a unique blend of opportunities as a career. Rare in other industries will you find a more eclectic group of individuals under one roof! The major areas of operation are client servicing, media planning, creative and research.

#### Client Servicing

The face of the agency, Client Servicing, represents the agency to the client and the client within the agency. On receipt of a detailed brief from the client, the Account Executive and Account Planner chalk out a strategy based on the brand's positioning, its USP and its communication peg.

While the more renowned agencies require an MBA, some others will be satisfied with a Degree/Diploma in marketing or mass communication.

#### Media Planning

They guide ad agencies select the best outlet or medium to reach the customer they want. Media planners plan, schedule, book and purchase space in the print media (newspapers, magazines) or outdoors (billboards, kiosks and bus panels) and time (TV & radio, internet). The media planning also involve conducting some targeted research to assess recall and viewership/ readership of a campaign. Media planners should ideally have a background in Maths and Statistics, an MBA.

#### Accounts Planning

The servicing department which strategize and help evolve the budget, selecting the right media and drawing up the communication message after exchanging views with the client and with its own creative team, the media planning department and on occasions, the market research agency.

#### Copy Department

Copywriter's task is to send across the message in words – headline, followed by the body copy in the case of a press ad, a dialogue or jingle for a radio spot, or a detailed story board in the case of a TV commercial.

A good copywriter's must come out with unique and out of the box ideas and co-relate masses of data and research findings so as to present the conclusions in language that is lucid and convincing. He/She also needs patience to craft words into a definite and successful sales pitch. The paramount requirement is creativity and versatility.

#### Creative Department

The creative department's job is to identify the correct words, the most appropriate visuals – to catch the attention. The creative team can be further divided into two sections: Copy and Creative.

#### The Art Department

The look of a campaign accommodating the different components i.e. headline, visual, picture, text, logo, etc. in a given space. Selecting the size and type of the font, the visual treatment and the overall treatment is the purview of the visualisers and art directors.

A high level of originality and creative talent form the pillar, a degree in applied art or graphic design with knowledge of computer graphics/multimedia is required.

#### Market Research

The Research department tries to measure the effectiveness of the ad campaign. It is research that provides the media planner and creatives a scientific and measurable basis to sharp-focus their strategy. These professionals are from a variety of disciplines, but share a common comfort level with mathematical or statistical modelling, sampling techniques and psychographics.

#### Remuneration

In this industry rewards are directly commensurate with the initiative you display, the effort you put in and the results you achieve. If you are ambitious and hard working, you can quickly move up the ladder. Starting with Rs.6000 or thereabouts as a fresh wet-behind-the-ears trainee, you can easily gross ten times as much five years down the line if you've got what it takes.

#### Institutes/Colleges

Though few colleges offer specialisation in advertising at the bachelor's level. But elements of advertising such as media planning and client servicing are covered in Mass Communication courses offered at both the under-graduate and post-graduate level

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