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SEARCH

[General]

Arteriosclerosis: A generic term for several diseases in which the arterial wall becomes thickened and loses elasticity.

Vascular disease, which affects the brain, heart, kidneys, other vital organs, and extremities, is the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the USA and in most Western countries. There were almost 1 million deaths due to vascular disease in the USA in 1994 (twice as many as from cancer and 10 times as many as from accidents). Although prevention and treatment of coronary artery disease (CAD) resulted in a 28.6% reduction in age-adjusted death rates between 1984 and 1994, CAD and ischemic stroke combined are the number one killer in industrialized Western countries and are of increasing prevalence in the rest of the world.

The death rate from CAD among white men aged 25 to 34 is about 1/10,000; at age 55 to 64, it is nearly 1/100. This age relationship may be due to the time required for lesions to develop or to the duration of exposure to risk factors. The death rate from CAD among white men aged 35 to 44 is 6.1 times that among age-matched white women. For unknown reasons, the sex difference is less apparent in nonwhites.

Atherosclerosis is the most common and serious vascular disease. Nonatheromatous forms include arteriolosclerosis and Mönckeberg's arteriosclerosis.

The Merck Manual of Diagnosis and Therapy

Section 16. Cardiovascular Disorders

Chapter 201. Arteriosclerosis

Topics

[General]

Atherosclerosis

Nonatheromatous Arteriosclerosis

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