Fatigue, Irritability, and Demoralization Can Affect Your Heart Health

Mount Sinai Study Shows Vital Exhaustion May Raise Risk of Cardiovascular Disease

NEW YORK (Nov. 17, 2014) -- Fatigue, increased irritability, and feeling demoralized, may raise a healthy man or woman’s risk of first-time cardiovascular disease by 36 percent, according to a study led by researchers at Mount Sinai St. Luke’s and Mount Sinai Roosevelt hospitals presented on Nov. 17 at the American Heart Association’s Scientific Sessions 2014 in Chicago, IL.

The combination of fatigue, increased irritability, and feeling demoralized is medically known as vital exhaustion. In their study, Mount Sinai researchers found that vital exhaustion was associated with a dramatic increase in risk for first-time cardiovascular disease when compared to people not experiencing these three psychological factors.

“Our study shows vital exhaustion is an important risk factor for the development of cardiovascular disease in otherwise healthy people,” says lead author Randy Cohen, MD, Medical Director of the University Medical Practice Associates at Mount Sinai St. Luke’s and Mount Sinai Roosevelt. “Loss of vitality thus adds to a growing number of psychosocial risk factors that have now been linked to the development of cardiovascular disease, including anxiety, depression, and social isolation.”

Study researchers investigated the relationship between vital exhaustion and first-time heart disease in 11 prospective studies that involved 60,610 people without heart disease. The studies had an average follow-up of 6.5 years.

“The identification of vital exhaustion as a coronary artery disease (CAD) risk factor appears timely,” according to study co-author Alan Rozanski, MD, Chief of the Division of Cardiology at Mount Sinai St. Luke’s and Mount Sinai Roosevelt. “As society becomes increasingly fast paced, there is an increasing tendency for people to overwork while cutting back on sleep, exercise, and the rest and relaxation we all need to renew ourselves and prevent the factors that cause vital exhaustion.”

Other study co-authors include: Jincy Thankachen, MD and Chirag Bavishi, MD of Mount Sinai St. Luke’s and Mount Sinai Roosevelt.

About the Mount Sinai Health System
The Mount Sinai Health System is an integrated health system committed to providing distinguished care, conducting transformative research, and advancing biomedical education.
Structured around seven member hospital campuses and a single medical school, the Health System has an extensive ambulatory network and a range of inpatient and outpatient services—from community based facilities to tertiary and quaternary care.

The System includes approximately 6,600 primary and specialty care physicians, 12 minority owned free standing ambulatory surgery centers, over 45 ambulatory practices throughout the five boroughs of New York City, Westchester, and Long Island, as well as 31 affiliated community health centers. Physicians are affiliated with the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, which is ranked among the top 20 medical schools both in National Institutes of Health funding and by U.S. News & World Report.

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