

15.04.2011 - 08:32 Uhr

Study Suggests up to 135,000 Lives Could be Saved in Europe Each Year Through Better Control of Cardiovascular Risk Factors

Geneva (ots/PRNewswire) -

Results from a large pan-European study suggest that up to 135,000 deaths from cardiovascular disease (CVD), such as heart attacks and strokes, could be prevented in Europe each year through better control of risk factors including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking and diabetes.[1] This equates to one preventable death every four minutes.[1]

The European Study on Cardiovascular Risk Prevention and Management in Daily Practice (EURIKA) was a large public health study carried out in 12 European countries. The study included over 7,000 patients who had at least one risk factor for CVD. Results from the study were presented today by the panel of experts leading the research, at this year's EuroPREvent medical conference in Geneva.

Dr Eliseo Guallar from the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, USA, one of the experts involved in the study, said: "We already know that certain risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking and diabetes, can increase the likelihood of developing CVD. However, our understanding of the link between these risk factors and the chance of dying from CVD - particularly if these conditions are poorly managed - is limited. With the EURIKA study, we aimed to quantify this link to establish how many lives we could save each year by providing better preventative care in Europe."

In analysing results from the study, the experts estimated that the four key CVD risk factors accounted for nearly 60% (57.7%) of the risk of dying from CVD in the next 10 years (or 'CVD death'), which equates to a 5.66% 'excess risk of death'. [1] This means that of the 4.3 million deaths from CVD in Europe each year, [2] an estimated 5.66% are directly linked to the presence of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking and diabetes. [1]

Results also suggest that poor management of these risk factors accounts for nearly 30% (29.2%) of the risk of CVD death, which equates to a 3.12% 'excess risk of death' - or up to 135,000 preventable deaths every year. [1]

Professor Julian Halcox, Cardiff University, UK, another of the experts involved in the study, said: "These data highlight the staggering number of lives that could be saved each year by managing risk factors for heart disease and stroke more effectively. Having calculated this link, we must now focus on providing the best preventative care to patients across Europe. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking and diabetes can all be managed effectively through lifestyle changes, appropriate drug treatments or a combination of the two. Based on these data we are urging doctors and patients to work even more closely together to control these risk factors and reduce the long-term risk of cardiovascular death."

CVD is the leading cause of death in Europe; it is responsible for 54% of deaths in women and 43% of deaths in men, killing more people than all cancers combined. [2] The main forms of CVD are coronary heart disease and stroke.

About the EURIKA Study

The European Study on Cardiovascular Risk Prevention and Management in Daily Practice (EURIKA) was a large public health study. The study was conducted across 12 European countries including Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Norway, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the UK. These countries were selected to represent the whole spectrum of CVD risk, risk factor control, and organisation of health-care services across Europe. Data collection started in May 2009 and was completed in January 2010.

The EURIKA study was funded by AstraZeneca as part of its ongoing commitment to improving the management of CVD and its risk factors.

About the experts leading the study

The EURIKA study was designed, executed and analysed by an independent, academic panel of experts from across Europe. Members of the panel included:

- Eliseo Guallar, Departments of Epidemiology and Medicine and Welch Center for Prevention, Epidemiology, and Clinical Research. John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Baltimore, USA; Department of Cardiovascular Epidemiology and Population Genetics. National Center for Cardiovascular Research (CNIC). Madrid, Spain.
- Julian P.J. Halcox, Wales Heart Research Institute, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK.
- Jean Dallongeville, Inserm U 744, Institut Pasteur de Lille, Lille Cedex, France.
- Jose R. Banegas, Department of Preventative Medicine and Public Health. School of Medicine, Universidad Autonoma de Madrid. CIBER of Epidemiology and Public Health. Madrid, Spain
- Fernando Rodriguez Artalejo, Department of Preventative Medicine and Public Health. School of Medicine, Universidad Autonoma de Madrid. CIBER of Epidemiology and Public Health. Madrid, Spain
- Claudio Borghi, Department of Internal Medicine, Ageing and Clinical Nephrology. University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy.
- Guy De Backer, Professor Emeritus, Ghent University. Past-chair of the Department of Public Health, Ghent University, Ghent Belgium. PAST -director of the Dept of Cardiology at Ghent University Hospital Ghent Belgium.
- Joep Perk, School of Health and Caring Sciences, Linnaeus University, Kalmar, Sweden.
- Ph.Gabriel Steg, INSERM U-698, Universite Paris-Diderot and Assistance Publique - Hopitaux de Paris, Paris, France

About AstraZeneca

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[1] Guallar E et al. The European Study on Cardiovascular Risk Prevention and Management in Daily Practice. Poster P120. Presented at EuroPrevent, 14-16 April 2011, Geneva, Switzerland

[2] European Heart Network. Cardiovascular Disease Statistics. <http://www.ehnheart.org/cdv-statistics.html>
 Accessed on 28 March 2011.

For more information about the EURIKA study, or to speak with one of the experts involved in the study, please contact:

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