

Obesity

Cardiovascular diseases



Prevalence

In 2012, heart disease was the second leading cause of death among Quebecers, both men and women.¹ In 2011-2012, the prevalence of heart disease in adults was 5% and that of hypertension 15.4%.²

In 2009, almost 5% of Canadians (1.3 million) were diagnosed with heart disease. This is an important economic burden, since the disease generates direct costs (health care) and indirect costs (loss of productivity resulting from mortality or disability). In 2000, these costs were estimated at 22.2 billion dollars.³

Risk factors

Several factors are associated with cardiovascular disease, some of which called non-modifiable (age, gender, genetics, etc.). On

the other hand, there are many modifiable factors, such as obesity, overweight, sedentary lifestyle, diabetes, high blood pressure, smoking, alcohol abuse and poor eating habits.^{4,5}

According to the World Health Organization, at least 80% of coronary artery disease cases could be prevented or delayed by proper nutrition, regular physical activity, smoking cessation and effective stress management.⁶

Link with obesity

Excess adipose mass can generate additional stress on the heart. For example, a larger blood volume is needed to fuel excess fat, which increases heart rate to the point that some heart muscle can hypertrophy. This increase in blood flow is also associated with the risk of hypertension. Moreover, obesity accelerates atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries due to plaque build).⁷

References

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- ⁶ Agence de la santé publique du Canada (2010). *Maladies chroniques et obésité au Canada*. Consulted online on July 14, 2016 at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/ipchls-spimmvs/sum-res-fra.php>
- ⁷ Mathew, B., Francis, L., Kayalar, A., & Cone, J. (2008). Obesity: Effects on Cardiovascular Disease and its Diagnosis. *The Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine*, 21(6), 562-568.