

Moderate aerobics may lower stroke risk

Moderate but not excessive aerobic exercise can lower the risk of stroke for both men and women, a new study has found.

Researchers at the University of South Carolina came to this conclusion after analysing data on more than 60,000 people - 46,405 men and 15,282 women - who participated in a study between 1970 and 2001 in Dallas.

Stroke is a major killer worldwide, claiming about 150,000 lives in the US alone.

In India, during the last decade, the age-adjusted prevalence rate of stroke has been found to be between 250-350 per 100,000 people.

The participants, aged between 18 and 100 and free of cardiovascular disease when they entered the study, were followed for an average of 18 years.

During that time, 863 people - 692 men and 171 women - had strokes.

Findings of the new study were presented Thursday at the American Stroke Association's international stroke conference.

'Fitness has a protective effect regardless of the presence or absence of other factors, including family history of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol levels,' said Steven Hooker, the study's lead author.

'This study is the first to link cardio-respiratory fitness (CRF) and fatal and nonfatal stroke in men and nonfatal stroke in women,' said Hooker of the University of South Carolina.

Each participant took a test to measure CRF in which they walked on a treadmill at increasing grade and/or speed until they reached their maximal aerobic capacity.

One of the study's limitations is that most of the participants were white, well-educated and middle-upper income, he said. He recommended that data be collected from other populations.

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