



HDL protective against cardiac rhythm disturbances

Low HDL cholesterol levels are associated with increased risk of developing cardiac arrhythmia in patients with non-ST elevation acute coronary syndromes, according to a study from the Banner Good Samaritan Hospital and Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Phoenix, Arizona. Findings were reported at the Scientific Sessions, American Heart Association Annual Meeting 2007.¹

The study included 6,881 patients with non-ST segment elevation acute coronary syndromes and fasting lipids measured within the first 24 hours of hospital admission, recruited during 2002-2003. Patients were followed for the development of rhythm disturbances up to 6 years after this initial event.

After adjusting for medical history (ischaemic heart disease, congestive heart failure, stroke, peripheral vascular disease and hypertension), age, body mass index and levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and triglycerides, HDL cholesterol was shown to independently protect against the development of atrial fibrillation and other cardiac rhythm disturbances (HDL cholesterol > 31 mg/dL, hazard ratio 3.69, 95%CI 3.01-4.53, $p < 0.05$). This effect was evident in patients with and without diabetes.

The researchers concluded that these data emphasise the importance of raising HDL cholesterol levels in patients with non-ST elevation acute coronary syndromes.

Reference

1. Kalayeh N, Kahn Y, Yarkoni A et al. High density lipoprotein cholesterol is protective against the development of cardiac rhythm disturbances in the non-ST segment elevation acute coronary syndrome. *Circulation* 2007;116:II_316. Abstract 1525.