Scalp Hair May Show Stress Levels and Risk of Heart Disease

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Hair can say more about someone than what color and texture tresses they have. Indeed, strands of hair can reveal valuable information about stress levels of the elderly that can be used to determine an individual's risk of heart disease and stroke, according to findings recently published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism and reported by Science Daily.

For the study, researchers calculated levels of the hormone cortisol in a group of 283 seniors, between ages 65 and 85, who lived in a community home. To collect information, scientists measured cortisol levels in hair samples taken from areas close to the scalp of participants. Findings showed that people with high levels of the hormone were more likely to have a history of stroke, peripheral arterial disease or diabetes.

"Because scalp hair can capture information about how cortisol levels have changed over time, hair analysis gives us a better tool for evaluating that risk," said Laura Manenschijn, MD, of Erasmus, MC, a university medical center in the Netherlands, and a lead study author. Manenschijn compared finding elevated cortisol levels in hair to detecting high blood pressure or abdominal fat as signs someone is at risk of cardiovascular disease.

Another researcher said that although the findings clearly showed a link between chronically elevated cortisol levels and heart disease, more studies are needed to evaluate long-term measurement of the hormone's presence in hair as a way to predict cardiovascular disease. In addition, the scientist suggested additional research might also show how this information could be used to create new treatments or prevention strategies for heart disease.

Did you know that certain medical conditions or illnesses, such as lupus, hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism (an underactive or overactive thyroid gland) and diabetes, among others, may cause hair loss? Click here to read more.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/Hair-stresslevels-heartdisease-24091-6419