

Thyrotropin levels may be associated with coronary heart disease mortality in women

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Women with increasing levels of thyrotropin within the normal range appear to have a higher risk of fatal coronary heart disease, according to a report in the April 28 issue of *Archives of Internal Medicine*, one of the JAMA/Archives journals.

Thyrotropin, a hormone produced by the pituitary gland, is released into the blood and acts on the thyroid gland to stimulate its growth and function, according to background information in the article. “Emerging evidence indicates that levels of thyrotropin within the reference [normal] range are positively and linearly associated with systolic [top number] and diastolic [bottom number] blood pressure, body mass index and serum lipid concentrations with adverse effects on cardiovascular health.”

Bjørn O. Åsvold, M.D., of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway, and colleagues studied the association between thyrotropin levels and fatal heart disease in 17,311 women and 8,002 men without known thyroid disease, cardiovascular disease or diabetes at the beginning of the study.

During follow-up, 228 women (1.3 percent) and 182 men (2.3 percent) had died of coronary heart disease. “Of these, 192 women and 164 men had thyrotropin levels within the clinical reference range of 0.5 milli-international units per liter to 3.5 milli-international units per liter,” the authors write. “Overall, thyrotropin levels within the reference range were positively associated with coronary heart disease mortality; the

trend was statistically significant in women but not in men.”

Source: JAMA and Archives Journals

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