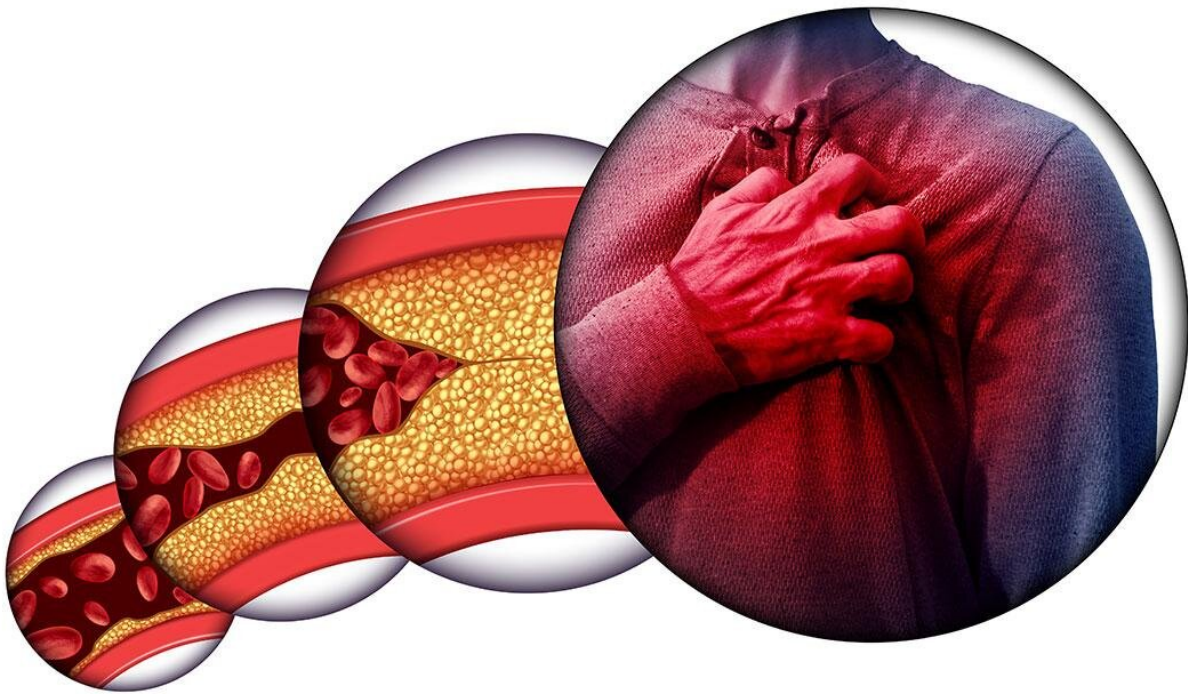


Lifestyle factors increase the risk of metabolic disease in non-obese as well as obese people

November 18 2021



Researchers from the University of Tsukuba find that risk factors for metabolic syndrome are similar in both lean and obese individuals, and that the risk level conferred by these factors tends to be higher in non-obese people. Credit: Lightspring/Shutterstock

Researchers from Japan have found that lifestyle habits play an important role in predicting the risk of developing metabolic syndrome in non-obese individuals, not only obese individuals.

In a study published this month in *Preventive Medicine*, researchers from the University of Tsukuba have revealed that the level of risk that lifestyle factors confer for metabolic syndrome tends to be higher in non-obese than obese individuals in Japan.

Metabolic syndrome is a complex of abdominal obesity, hyperglycemia, dyslipidemia, and hypertension. People with metabolic syndrome are more likely to develop [cardiovascular disease](#) and diabetes than people who do not have these traits.

"It is known that non-obese individuals with some of these characteristics (hyperglycemia, dyslipidemia, and hypertension) are also more likely to develop cardiovascular disease and diabetes," says lead author of the study Professor Fumi Takeda. "However, it is unclear what lifestyle factors put non-obese people at risk of developing metabolic syndrome."

To answer this question, the researchers analyzed data from almost 100,000 Japanese adults who underwent specific health checkups consisting of a medical examination and a self-administered questionnaire about lifestyle factors such as eating, drinking, smoking, and exercise habits.

"The results showed similarities in risk factors for metabolic syndrome among both obese and non-obese individuals," explains Professor Takeda. "We found that [older age](#), male sex, weight gain greater 10 kg since their 20s, current smoking, slow walking, quick eating, and greater alcohol consumption put individuals at higher risk of developing metabolic syndrome, regardless of whether they were obese or not."

A lack of regular exercise was linked to metabolic syndrome in obese, but not non-obese individuals.

"Our findings suggest that metabolic syndrome can occur even in non-obese individuals who have similar [lifestyle habits](#) to [obese individuals](#)," states Professor Takeda.

Given that these lifestyle factors can lead to metabolic syndrome even in lean people, counseling lean older men regarding smoking cessation and reducing alcohol intake, among other [lifestyle factors](#), could help prevent the development of [metabolic syndrome](#), and thereby decrease their risk of developing cardiovascular disease and diabetes later in life.

More information: Ayako Kikuchi et al, Risk factors for multiple metabolic syndrome components in obese and non-obese Japanese individuals, *Preventive Medicine* (2021). [DOI: 10.1016/j.ypmed.2021.106855](#)

Provided by University of Tsukuba

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