

Mini-Stroke – The warning bells for a heart attack

Do not neglect a transient-ischemic attack (TIA) or “mini-stroke” as it has the power to double the chances of developing a heart attack. This startling revelation was published in the medical journal called *Stroke* following a research conducted by a team from Mayo Clinic.

A TIA may not be lasting more than a few minutes but it is enough to ring the warning bells that the patient might be suffering from a coronary heart ailment.

The TIAs usually take place when there is some obstruction or disruption of blood flow to an area of the brain. This results in loss of vision, dizziness or even numbness in a certain area of the body that includes the face or the limbs. The patient may also experience some trouble in walking or talking. The whole thing generally lasts for around a couple of hours.

The study which has shed new light on TIA was conducted by a team led by Dr. Robert D. Brown Jr. who currently holds the chair of the neurology department at the Mayo Clinic.

456 patients from Rochester, Minn participated in the study out of which 43 per cent were men. Each had undergone a TIA in the period between 1985 and 1994.

Brown Jr. also took into account other factors like high blood pressure, smoking, use of aspirin etc. 75 per cent of the patients were found to use aspirin to treat blood clots. Besides 50 per cent were discovered to be smokers and 66 per cent had high blood pressure.

The research indicated that patients who have had a TIA are more susceptible to heart attacks. In fact the study pointed out that people having suffered from TIA had 1% chance of developing a heart attack in a year which is double the risk of people who have not experienced a TIA.

Plus shockingly the risk would keep on persisting as the years would progress and people less than 60 years were the most vulnerable group with them being 15 times more likely to develop a coronary heart disease.

The research also gave evidence that people who were on statins to lower their high cholesterol levels, were also at greater risk.

Some other factors identified to increase the risk were old age and being a male.

Stephen Green, MD and associate director of the Cardiac Catheterization Laboratories located at North Shore University Hospital in New York, warned that TIA needs to be given importance and a patient who has had a TIA needs to consult a doctor immediately to ensure that his chances of having a heart attack are minimized.

Proper care is required and that includes cutting down smoking or control of diabetes. Hence it is advised to visit a neurologist as well as a cardiologist who will make sure that the person is taking necessary steps to avoid a heart attack.

Dr. Gregg C. Fonarow who is a professor of cardiology at the University of California in Los Angeles revealed that every year around 250, 000 – 350, 000 fall victims to TIA and therefore TIAs should be treated with the importance.