

ANEURYSM: A SWIFT KILLER

by:

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The number of people dying from aneurysms has been increasing these past few weeks. Most people are not aware of this disease but an aneurysm is sure to cause death. This article will venture into the characteristics of this disease and how to avoid it.

An aneurysm occurs when an artery's wall weakens and causes an abnormally large bulge. Arteries are blood vessels that carry blood from the heart to the rest of the body while the veins bring blood back to the heart and lungs. This bulge can rupture and lead to internal bleeding and sometimes death. Although an aneurysm can develop in any part of the body, they are most common in the brain and the heart (Macon and Roland, 2021).

The Official Website of DepED Division of Bataan

Causes

While people can be born with aneurysms already, some families can be more prone to them. When there is a gradual weakening of the wall of the artery or vein, an aneurysm can occur. The weakening may be triggered by high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, or smoking. Blockages such as fatty acids can cause the heart to pump harder causing stress and damage to the artery. Another cause is the atherosclerotic disease which is a form of plaque build-up in the artery. The website healthdirect.gov.au also listed stimulants like cocaine to cause an aneurysm.

Symptoms

Symptoms vary depending on the location of the bursts. An indication of a ruptured aneurysm in the brain is a sudden and excruciating headache while these

symptoms can also be manifested: vision problems, sensitivity to light, nausea, vomiting, and loss of consciousness. The website healthdirect.gov.au also included stroke and the main symptoms of a stroke can be easily remembered using the word FAST (face, arms, speech, and time are crucial). The face may have dropped on one side making it unable to smile or their mouth and eye may have dropped. Arms may not be able to lift objects because of weakness and numbness. The speech may also be slurred or garbled and may not be able to talk despite consciousness. When these symptoms are present, timing is crucial. Calling for immediate help is a must.

On the other hand, an aortic aneurysm depends on whether the burst happened in the chest or the abdomen. Macon and Roland (2021) enumerated the following as symptoms of thoracic aortic aneurysm rupture are as follows: sudden and severe chest pain, sudden back pain, a significant drop in the blood pressure, and numbness in the limbs. A ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm may cause these: sudden and severe pain in the abdomen or lower back, rapid heart rate, dizziness or lightheadedness, shortness of breath, and cold sweat.

Bleeding, increased heart rate, shortness of breath, sudden chest pain, sudden abdominal pain, and feeling dizzy or lightheaded are symptoms that need immediate action, especially for people who are aware of having an aneurysm.

Diagnosis

Since it can happen in the different parts of the body the diagnosis depends on the parts where it happened. A CT scan and ultrasound use images in detecting abnormalities in the arteries and blood vessels. CT scans and x-rays can detect blockages, bulges, and weak spots that occurred in the blood vessel.

Treatment

For people who are aware of their aneurysms, regular checkups are a must. If there are signs of possible bursting and rupture, immediate surgery may be needed.

The type of surgery needed for a ruptured aneurysm depends on the location of the burst. A weakened spot in the chest and abdomen may require an endovascular stent graft. Other treatment can include medication that treats high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Prevention

WikiHow listed several ways on how to avoid an aneurysm. Starting with knowing if one has a family history of it. Screenings to detect whether a person has it or not are advised for people having fears of it. Mostly, the aneurysm is detected when there are medical emergencies already, and sometimes, it can be too late for surgeries. Early detection after having experienced the symptoms is highly advised.

Like in most diseases, maintaining good health is still the best way to prevent an aneurysm. Quitting smoking or even avoiding secondhand smoke is a good start in avoiding the disease. Too much alcohol can also weaken the blood vessel walls which in turn increases the possibility of an aneurysm. Abuse of drugs, prescription or otherwise, is also a culprit as it can cause inflammation in blood vessels.

Choosing a diet with a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meat, and non-meat protein sources not only helps in preventing aneurysms but other diseases as well. A proper diet is always best teamed up with exercising regularly. Maintaining good cardio health and some strength training can help prevent ruptures.

Work and home can be stressful most of the time but managing stress can help avoid developing an aneurysm. Managing stress can start with knowing what one is stressed about and start working on it. Taking time to relax no matter how impossible it

can be is one way to maintain good mental health. Meditating especially regularly is one simple way of relaxing which can be done anywhere and anytime.

With all the things happening around, the only thing one can count on is their body. One should keep on taking care of it to avoid treating it too late.

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