

Risk of disease due to heredity and lifestyle project

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ID Personal Risk of Developing Hypertension Hereditary and lifestyle

diseases in America are a major public health concern. It is necessary that the public understand how genetic predisposition increases the likelihood of someone developing certain diseases. The knowledge of modification of lifestyle is essential as certain behaviors either lessen the potential of developing the hereditary diseases or exacerbate them. The public needs to be aware of such behaviors to be able to make informed decisions.

I interviewed my mom and uncle on the hereditary diseases in our family. They denied any history of diabetes, cancers, sickle cell disease, polycystic kidney disease, blood disorders or chromosome abnormalities. However, they admitted that my maternal grandparent died from a complication of hypertension. My father's brother too has had high blood pressure for twenty years. His doctor made the diagnosis when he was twenty-eight years old. Fortunately, he has managed to control it well, with only a few hospital admissions.

The risk of developing hypertension is greater when one has close relatives or parents who have or had the condition (Whelton, He and Louis 5). Since there is a history of high blood pressure both from my maternal and paternal side, my risk of developing hypertension is great. The chances of me getting hypertension are even higher since I do not have an exercise program and have fast food for lunch on many occasions. It is not possible to control heredity because it is not possible to isolate the genes that are responsible for high blood pressure from the rest of the human genome. However, it is possible to modify one's lifestyle and diet to reduce the risk of developing the disease altogether.

Hypertension that is uncontrolled is one of the leading causes of disability

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among the US population (Whelton, He and Louis 2). Eventually, it causes a poor quality of life and might even cause blindness or a fatal heart attack. It damages the blood cells lining the blood vessels resulting in health emergencies like aneurysms. It also plays a significant role in the development of coronary artery disease, enlarged left heart and cardiac failure. It also causes damage to the kidneys and could result in kidney failure. Perhaps the biggest risk of having high blood pressure is the risk of getting a stroke when one of the small arteries in the brain ruptures.

Undoubtedly, I need a lifestyle modification plan to avoid developing hypertension. To start with, it is essential to have regular screening for blood pressure and related diseases, especially kidney and other cardiovascular diseases (Whelton, He and Louis 10). It is also important to maintain a body mass index of between nineteen and twenty-four. I intend to implement an exercise program that involves running a mile every morning. It is also necessary for me to manage school-related stress by completing assignments in good time, ensuring early preparation for examinations and setting achievable goals.

Diet modification is also necessary to prevent developing hypertension (Whelton, He and Louis 11). It involves reducing the consumption of foods that are high in sugars, fats and salt but increasing intake of fruits and vegetables. Furthermore, I should read food labels in the supermarket to avoid buying foods high in cholesterol, sugars and sodium. The diet should include mostly fish, lean meat, skinless poultry, beans, whole grain, high-fiber foods and low-fat dairy products. My alcohol intake should be limited to a maximum of one drink per day and avoid smoking. To facilitate this, I plan to minimize contact with heavy drinkers and smokers.

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I hope that with the lifestyle and dietary modifications specified above, I will remain free of hypertension and the complications related to it. Evidence suggests that with the correct lifestyle modification, people with a genetic predisposition for hypertension could avoid it all together (Whelton, He and Louis 2).

Work Cited

Whelton, P., J. He and G. T. Louis. Lifestyle Modification for the Prevention and Treatment of Hypertension . CRC Press, 2003. Print.