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High salt intake linked to stroke

ANI29 November 2009, 12:00am IST

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A collaborative study has shown that high salt intake is linked to significantly greater risk of both stroke and cardiovascular disease.



High salt intake linked to stroke (Getty Images)

The association between high salt intake and high blood pressure is well established, and it has been suggested that a population-wide reduction in dietary salt intake has the potential to substantially reduce the levels of cardiovascular disease.

The World Health Organization recommended level of salt consumption is 5 g (about one teaspoon) per day at the population level.

For the study, Professor Pasquale Strazzullo at the University of Naples, Italy and Professor Francesco Cappuccio at the University of Warwick, UK, analysed the results of 13 published studies involving over 170,000 people that directly assessed the relationship between

levels of habitual salt intake and rates of stroke and cardiovascular disease.

Differences in study design and quality were taken into account to minimise bias.

Their analysis shows unequivocally that a difference of 5 g a day in habitual salt intake is associated with a 23 per cent difference in the rate of stroke and a 17 per cent difference in the rate of total cardiovascular disease.

Based on these results, the authors estimate that reducing daily salt intake by 5 g at the population level could avert one and a quarter million deaths from stroke and almost three million deaths from cardiovascular disease each year.

Furthermore, because of imprecision in measurement of salt intake, these effect sizes are likely to be underestimated, say the authors.

These results support the role of a substantial population reduction in salt intake for the prevention of cardiovascular disease, the researchers concluded.

The study has been published on bmj.com today.

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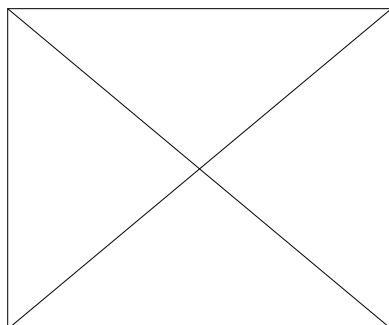
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