



Press Release

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High Estrogen Levels, Diabetes Together May Increase Dementia Risk 14-Fold in Older Women

MINNEAPOLIS – Older women who have high estrogen levels and diabetes may have a 14 times increased risk of dementia, according to a new study published in the January 29, 2014, online issue of *Neurology*[®], the medical journal of the [American Academy of Neurology](http://www.aan.com).

Blood estrogens were measured in women free of dementia aged 65 or older. After a four-year follow-up, 543 women who did not have dementia were compared with 132 women who had dementia. Scientists looked at a number of risk factors for dementia, including diabetes, high blood pressure, abnormal blood clotting and other heart health risk factors.

The study found that women who had high estrogen levels had a risk of dementia more than doubled after accounting for other dementia risk factors. For those who had high estrogen levels and diabetes, the risk for dementia increased dramatically, by 14 times. Estrogen levels were about 70 percent higher in women with diabetes who also had dementia compared to those without dementia. No other heart health risk factors raised the dementia risk.

“These results are surprising, given the expected brain protective effects of estrogen-based therapy,” said study author Pierre-Yves Scarabin, MD, with the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research (INSERM) in Villejuif, France. “However, more and more evidence suggests an association between high estradiol levels and dementia in women who have undergone menopause. Considering the expected increase in the number of elderly people with diabetes and dementia, more research on this topic should be urgently conducted.”

The research was supported by INSERM, the Victor Segalen-Bordeaux II University, Sanofi-Aventis, Foundation for Medical Research, National Health Fund for Employees, Directorate General of Health, MGEN, Institute of Longevity, Regional Councils of Aquitaine and Bourgogne, Foundation of France, and the National Agency of Research.

To learn more about dementia, please visit AAN.com/patients.

The American Academy of Neurology, an association of more than 27,000 neurologists and neuroscience professionals, is dedicated to promoting the highest quality patient-centered neurologic care. A neurologist is a doctor with specialized training in diagnosing, treating and managing disorders of the brain and nervous system such as Alzheimer’s disease, stroke, migraine, multiple sclerosis, brain injury, Parkinson’s disease and epilepsy.

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