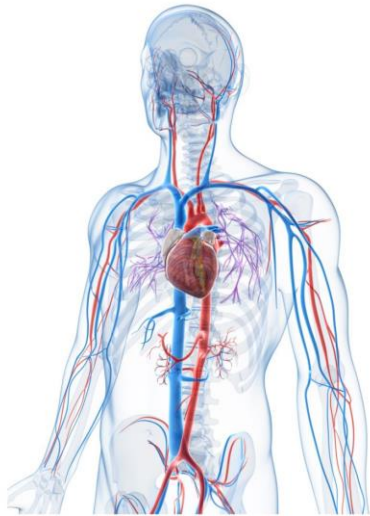


THE CARDIOVASCULAR-SYSTEM

The cardiovascular system is a network of organs including blood vessels which work to get oxygenated blood and nutrients to our cells (Cleveland Clinic, 2021). This system is also responsible for getting rid of waste products in the body, so it is therefore vital for individuals to take care of their heart and cholesterol levels as these have a direct impact on our cardio-vascular system. The right side of the heart is responsible for de-oxygenated blood whereas the left side of the heart is responsible for oxygenated blood.



The cardiovascular system consists of the heart which is a muscular pump forcing blood around the body. A closed system of blood vessels called the capillaries, arteries and veins. Arteries carry oxygenated blood away from the heart. The capillaries connect the arterioles and venules, blood leaves the capillaries de-oxygenated. The veins carry de-oxygenated blood to the heart (Sherrell, 2021).

The cardio vascular system also has other functions such as fighting infections. Red blood cells are what carries oxygen molecules inside of the blood. White blood cells are what fight off infections. And platelets are what form blood clots when there is an open wound or cut which prevents other infectious organisms entering the blood stream (Cotterill, 2014).

Possible health issues with the cardio-vascular system

Cardiovascular disease is a term used to describe the diseases involved with the heart or blood, there are 4 main types of cardio vascular disease, these include coronary heart disease, stroke, peripheral arterial disease and aortic disease (NHS Inform, 2020). These diseases can be as a result of reduced blood flow due to blood clots or build-up of fatty material inside the arteries.



There are symptoms of cardiovascular disease, these include: chest pain, breathlessness, fatigue, fast/slow heartbeat and many more. There are also many factors which contribute to cardiovascular disease such as smoking, alcohol, stress, diabetes, being physically inactive, ethnic background and family history of disease (British Heart Foundation, 2019).

The best way an individual can prevent these diseases or combat them is through lifestyle changes, medication, stents or a pacemaker. Avoiding foods with high fat and high sugar, is a great way to reduce the risk of any cardiovascular disease, as these foods result in high blood pressure, weight gain and insulin resistance (tutor2u, 2023).



SOCIAL FACTORS ON CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

There are multiple social determinants which impact our overall health such as: income, education, work conditions, early childhood, health services and food insecurity (World Health Organization, 2022). Research has also highlighted that social determinants are more significant to our health than health care and lifestyle choices.



It has been established that social factors impact our overall health however they do also have an impact on our cardiovascular health. Psychosocial factors such as emotional factors and chronic stressors have an impact on our cardiovascular health. Health behaviours also increase the risk of Cardiovascular disease, things such as smoking, inactivity and poor diet (Atkinson, 2017).

There are a range of social determinants on our cardiovascular health, it is therefore important for individuals to keep an eye on things such as their working conditions, physical health and their income. Speaking to financial advisors, doctors and their employer are ways in which these issues can be resolved. Conversing with experts will indefinitely have a positive impact on one's life and cardiovascular health.



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