Fibrinogen: The Overlooked Blood Marker That Predicts Heart Attacks Better Than Cholesterol Transcript

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Introduction to Fibrinogen and Heart Risk

Now here, a study done at Royal College of General Practitioners found that the incidence of heart attacks and blood pressure was dramatically increased. The high blood pressure was six times greater. Heart attacks was 12 times greater in people that have high plasma fibrinogen levels versus those with low, and in this case, mean low normal fibrinogen levels. That's a massive and important number. So even if you have high cholesterol or high blood pressure, or 600 % and 1200 % less likely to suffer a heart attack if your fibrinogen levels are at a safe level. Everybody needs to watch this, but if you have high cholesterol or high blood pressure, you need to be particularly watchful. Hi, and welcome to The Balancing Point. I'm Dr. John Neters, and I'm here to make traditional Chinese medicine, functional medicine, and integrative health simple, practical, and fun so you can restore balance, boost vitality, and enjoy a healthier life every single day. Hi, this is Dr. John, and I'm here today to further go into some tests that should be run quite regularly by your medical doctors and generally are not. I did one presentation on how to predict heart disease 30 years in advance in women, and it's by running three simple tests. And if we run them, it's a total of $38. So it's very inexpensive, great predictor of cardiovascular disease.

The Balancing Point and Lab Testing Philosophy

Now that I did because it came out of a particular study and a particular report. But I want to talk about a fourth item that should be checked by cardiologists very, very regularly. Again, a very inexpensive test, but it just gets overlooked. this a little blurb here. I thought I'd throw it in. It says Dr. John and Katherine's book is finally published. Well, that was our first book. So I actually did this presentation sometime back for a class and I'm repeating it because now the sweet spot two, which is on another set of lab tests is also out. And in the sweet spot, we look at the actual healthy ranges. When you look at a lab test and it says reference range, or it says standard range, A, those are not standard. Very few of the tests are standardized. So EGFR, estimated glomerular filtration rate for the, for kidney health, hemoglobin A1C for your blood sugars. Those are standardized, but most of them are not.

You can get huge ranges of what different groups call normal. And to us, normal is being in the sweet spot, that range, which gives you the lowest mortality risk over the next 10 years. And so that's what our practice is largely based upon. Now we see people with horrible looking labs and our goal is to keep them alive long enough to get back into the sweet spot and then keep them there. So that's, that's really our goal. And that's, that's our purpose in doing these webinars and podcasts or seminars and podcasts, whatever. And so the test I'm going to talk about in a minute is What we see talked about a lot, almost every doctor's visit if you're over 30 years old, is cholesterol. Now, cholesterol is regularly ordered as a lab test to monitor if you need to go on a drug, a statin drug basically. But increased cholesterol levels were found in fewer than 50 % of all heart attack and stroke victims. Okay, so it's clearly… Not the menace that it's generally painted to be. Is it important? Absolutely.

But I'm going to talk about four tests that are even more important. Three and another podcast and then one here. And there's a major overlooked risk factor. I don't know why that is. My assumption is that it's not approved as a first line test to be paid for by insurance.

Why Fibrinogen Matters More Than Cholesterol

And since it's not, then the doctors don't run it. But. This is not just my opinion, the World Health Organization published a study, they've actually published a few, looking at the overlooked risk that this particular chemical marker brings to the table. And it's a blood marker known as fibrinogen. So those cute little things there, those little pizza pie looking things are your red blood cells. And they're carrying the oxygen and all the nutrients out to your body. They're removing the carbon dioxide and toxins from your tissues so that you can get rid of them.

So very, very important, obviously. Now, fibrinogen is a marker that will show up individually, has to be ordered,

along with your CBC. Now, first we're going to see how it works in your bloodstream. It's a protein. It's produced by the liver. And in small quantities is absolutely vital for survival. You would die very quickly. In fact, at the beginning of COVID, there were a few people, a couple of them were medical doctors. So it got really reported who just bled out and they couldn't clot for a variety of reasons. So without fibrinogen, you cannot form a clot. So when you get, get a boo boo here on your knee, scrape your skin. Fibrinogen is what causes the blood to get thick. And eventually it's what forms a scab and it clots and holds the wound together. Absolutely critical. Absolutely. Otherwise you could die from a paper cut. It also works in your arteries by creating small clotting agents that hatch up cracks and crevices from inflammation. So the blood vessels, the veins are very, very thin. The arteries are very, very massively muscular. But even then in the arteries, there's a one cell layer thick, I'm going to call it an organ, but it's one cell layer thick that lines the arteries and it's what protects the arteries. It's only one cell thick. So any damage from a virus, from a bacteria, from inflammation, et cetera, can penetrate into that epithelium and gets up into the, between the artery itself and the epithelium, the body attempts to protect you by forming foam cells, which then cause calcium to be deposited. And that's all good.

It protects you. However, if you have too many of those, your arteries get calcified and can't really have good blood flow. the problem, now it's a problem if it's too low, but it's a bigger problem here if it's too high. When it happens to be too high, Instead of creating a small clot to repair the arterial damage, the fibrinogen begins to create an adverse event. It makes a big clot, a much larger clot that is needed to treat the particular problem.

And when that happens, those oversized clots can grow to the point where they close off the veins completely. They can cause major heart attacks. They can cause a stroke. So this is really a big deal. Harvard University study published a few years ago said that those with high fibrinogen levels had a two-fold increase in myocardial infarction risk. Now, go look at all the studies on cholesterol and you'll see that those with high cholesterol do not have a two-fold increase in myocardial infarction risk. So fibrinogen, way more important. Now here, a study done at Royal College of General Practitioners. found that the incidence of heart attacks and blood pressure was dramatically increased. High blood pressure was six times greater. Heart attacks was 12 times greater in people that have high plasma fibrinogen levels versus those with low, and in this case, mean low normal fibrinogen levels. That's a massive, massive and important number.

Healthy Fibrinogen Levels and Diet Strategies

So even if you have high cholesterol or high blood pressure, you're 600 % and 1200 % less likely to suffer a heart attack if your fibrinogen levels are at a safe level. everybody needs to watch this, but if you have high cholesterol or high blood pressure, you need to be particularly watchful. So your levels of fibrinogen can be easily tested. Every lab in the country, I would think, does this. It's called the fibrinogen activity test. It's been shown that a healthy fibrinogen level is under 300. Now again, going back to what I said before, where when you see a standard range or a reference range, it will show levels much higher than 300 and call them normal. But you want it under 300. And if your levels are lower, then you should get tested once or twice a year. If your levels are over 300, you should get your levels tested every three months. And again, this is such a critical test. And it's so inexpensive, there's no reason not to do it. Assessing your risk. Now this is interesting. Follow a strict Mediterranean diet, which will low fibrinogen risk. I just pulled up a study yesterday that was very compelling. And it was comparing the Mediterranean diet to the FODMAP diet in patients who had irritable bowel syndrome. And it showed that The simple, straightforward Mediterranean diet was almost twice as effective as the FODMAP diet at controlling IBS flares and in many cases, completely eliminated IBS. Now I don't use a FODMAP diet. I see patients that have come in after seeing a medical doctor and they've been put on FODMAP, but I find that nobody follows a FODMAP diet for very long because it is so, so restrictive. And now we see the Mediterranean diet where you can eat all of these great foods of vegetables, fruit, olive oil, fish, a little bit of meat. And you can actually be healthier than if you do a FODMAP diet. I was so excited to see that because I've told patients that was my opinion, but I didn't have good research behind it. Foods higher in omega-3, EPA and DHA. There's also another one called DPA. So when you do get an omega-3 fatty acid, fish oil, get EPA, DHA, and DPA, and you want two to three grams per day. Now, the belief system around this, the theories have kind of gone back and forth. Oh, fish oil is good for you. Oh no, it's not.

Again, this week I saw a new study showing a 50 % reduction in cardiovascular risk in people consuming two to three grams. per day, and here's the caveat, high quality fish oil.

Fish oil is the most important nutrient or supplement that you get as high quality. If fish oil sits out where it gets hot, if it's not properly temperature controlled, if it gets old, it can become rancid and then it's actually deadly. So you want to get your fish oil from very, very good suppliers. The other thing you want to look for is when they take fish oil apart, which they do, it's not just squashing a fish and throwing the oil, they actually go in and clean it up, take any toxicity out of it. Then they have two different possibilities about how they put it back together. One is called esterified and one is triglyceride bound.

Well, in nature, fish oils, the EPAs, DHAs, come as a triglyceride form. That's what your body recognizes. That's what your body will absorb. So the esterified form, even if it comes in much higher dosages, won't do you as much good. In fact, it may not do you much good at all. So always look for triglyceride bound, EPA, DHA, and DPA.

Supplements and Acupuncture for Blood Flow

And then you've got some magic in a bottle here. If your blood is thick, either from high fibrinogen or a few other things that can do that. I recommend natokinase and seropeptidase. There's another supplement that can work like that called lumbrokinase, but it's much more expensive. And I find natokinase and seropeptidase are generally quite all you need. So if your fibrillation levels are over 300, if you have significant blood stasis as identified by your acupuncturist, we can tell by taking your pulses. looking at your tongue if you have sticky blood. If you're taking long plane flights, anything over an hour, in fact, in Europe, they monitor executive travel and they will only allow their executives to travel a certain number of hours per month and a certain number of miles per month because the risk of deep vein thrombosis and cardiovascular problems is so incredibly high. So if you're in any of these categories, fibrointestinal over 300, You have sticky blood or blood stasis. If you're taking long plane fights, you want to take natokinase and seropeptidase. And seropeptidase is often called seropeptase. They leave the A days out of it. And so you want to take both of those. The caveat, the exception is if you're taking a blood thinner or even on aspirin, if you're taking it on a blood thinner, you probably don't want to do it at all. If you're taking aspirin, check with your a medical doctor to see if they think or if they're worried that it'll increase your risk for bleeding episodes.

Now, fibrinogen and acupuncture. This was an interesting study. 2020 study. It's shown, now this was on rats, on acupuncture points. There are other studies that have been done on humans, but this was the one I grabbed at the time. And by needling stomach 36, Zhu Sanli, which is probably the most needled point. in acupuncture practices that there were significant differences in plasma fibrinogen levels and it dramatically lowered those levels in the population. So stomach 36, located bilaterally on the outer lower leg, can be found a finger breadth from the border of the upper tibia, that's the big bone, and about three thumb breadths, that's how the Chinese measure, they call them body inches. below the lower border of the kneecap. And if you go online and just plug in stomach 36 or Zhu Sanli, you're going to get dozens of pictures of exactly where this is. Very powerful point. It's known as the longevity point in traditional Chinese medicine used by practitioners. Chairman Mao made it very famous because on his long marches with his army, when they couldn't go any further, he'd have them sit down and massage Zhu Sanli, which then started being called the three mile point. Cause he knew he could then get another three miles march out of his army. So it's an amazing point. Could sit here and talk about Zhu Sanli for two or three days without going through all of the important features. So it's important to get annual blood work in order to identify any issues before they become problems. Personally, I'm 74. I go in and get a blood draw every three to four months, just to make sure nothing's getting out of balance.

Annual Testing and Closing Remarks

Then when you get it done, schedule an appointment to get your lab work done and evaluated by someone who's going to evaluate it, looking for the sweet spot so that they're finding those functional levels that are going to keep you the healthiest, the longest. And I'd love to talk to you about that. With labs, we can actually do telehealth. I don't really need to have you. in front of me. I prefer to have you in front of me, but it's not necessary.

And so I want to thank you. Functional Medicine University. I want to give them a shout out. Some of this information came from them. If you're considering functional medicine, consider functional medicine university. That's where I studied and they're just fabulous people.

So I want to thank you for hanging around for this. I'll be back again next week with another episode of The

Balancing Point. Bye bye. Thank you. review. uh That's AlamedaAcupuncture.com to learn more, explore our supplements, or book a call. We'd love to hear from you.