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CUHK Advocates Atrial Fibrillation Screening and Drug Education to Reduce Risk of Stroke among Elderly

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27 January 2015

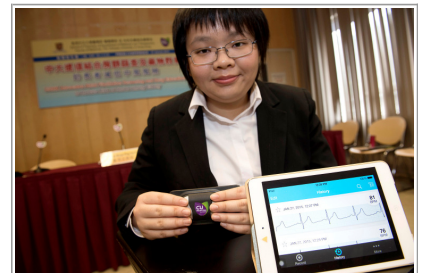
The prevalence of Atrial Fibrillation (AF) grows with the ageing population. According to global research, one in every five people aged 65 years and above will develop AF. The Faculty of Medicine at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) has been running an AF screening programme for the elderly in the community since 2013. The screening result showed that around 7% of the elderly suffering from AF are unaware of their condition and have little knowledge about the disease. In view of the situation, the Faculty of Medicine will conduct a large-scale AF screening and strengthen drug education to raise the awareness towards AF among the elderly.

AF is a kind of abnormal heart rhythm which can lead to stroke. Based on previous research, AF is accountable for up to 1 of 3 stroke cases among the elderly. Although AF-related strokes can be prevented in most patients with oral anticoagulation therapy such as warfarin, AF is difficult to diagnose due to its intermittent and silent symptoms. Therefore, many patients with AF are diagnosed after stroke incidents.

A team of student volunteers led by Dr. Vivian Lee, Associate Professor from CUHK School of Pharmacy and Dr. Bryan Yan, Associate Professor from the Department of Medicine and Therapeutic, the Faculty of Medicine, CUHK conducted AF screening for 1,581 older people aged 65 or above in the community with the use of a handheld ECG device between 2013 and 2014. The screening result shows that 110 (7%) older people were detected as having AF. Only 7.7% of the participants heard of AF and less than 5% were aware of the associated risk of stroke,



A student volunteer team led by Dr. Vivian Lee, Associate Professor from the School of Pharmacy (2 right) and Dr. Bryan Yan, Associate Professor from the Department of Medicine and Therapeutic, CUHK (2 left) conduct AF screening for the elderly in the community.



A student volunteer demonstrates the use of a handheld ECG device to conduct AF screening.

indicating that the elderly in Hong Kong do not have much knowledge about AF.

The Faculty of Medicine will launch another large-scale AF screening study funded by Hong Kong Research Grants Council in collaboration with the University of Sydney, Australia. The study aims to screen more than 25,000 elderly outpatients for undiagnosed AF at the Prince of Wales Hospital. The project leader Dr. Bryan Yan elaborated, “We will screen elderly outpatients who are willing to participate in AF screening with the use of a handheld ECG device. It takes less than 30 seconds for each person. Newly detected AF patients will be closely followed up. We hope the research data obtained will be useful in studying the feasibility of large-scaled AF screening and its impact on related medical expenditure. Our ultimate goal is to find a cost-effective strategy for prevention of AF related stroke.”

“The recent research reveals that 7% elderly participants are suffering from AF. Based on data from the Census and Statistics Department, we can estimate that 60,000 older people are suffering from AF without knowing, indicating the importance of carrying out an AF screening programme. Drug education and individual follow-up are also essential for effective treatment and stroke prevention, given that most of the elderly have little knowledge about the disease and drug.” explained Dr. Vivian Lee.

The CUHK volunteer team formed by teachers and students from Faculty of Medicine will expand from 12 members to 20 to expand the AF screening test. The team will refer AF diagnosed older people to cardiologists and visit them every 3 months for individual follow-up. In addition, the Faculty will organize two public lectures in June and September as well as a one-day carnival in 2015 to raise public awareness about AF and provide screening service. It is estimated that 5,000 older people will benefit from the programme.



Ms. Tsui (left), aged 80, suffers from atrial fibrillation without knowing until getting detected in a screening programme.

最新消息

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中大提倡結合房顫篩查及藥物教育 助長者減低中風風險

2015年01月27日

心房顫動（房顫）的病發率隨著人口老化而增長，國際研究指出現時每5名65歲或以上的長者當中，便有1人會患上房顫。香港中文大學(中大)醫學院於2013年起率先為社區長者進行房顫篩查，發現約7%的長者患有房顫而不自知，且對此疾病認識甚少。有見及此，中大醫學院將舉行大型房顫篩查和加強藥物教育，提高長者對房顫的認識。

房顫是心律不正的一種，可以誘發中風，過往研究指出每3宗中風個案中便有1宗是因房顫引起。雖然口服抗凝劑藥物治療可減少房顫引發中風的機會，但基於房顫只會間歇出現，又沒有明顯病徵，患者往往錯過治療機會，於中風後才被確診患有房顫。

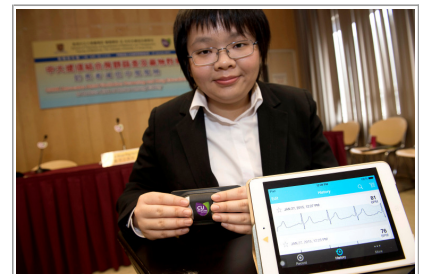
中大醫學院藥劑學院副教授李詠恩博士與內科及治療藥物學系副教授甄秉言醫生領導的學生義工隊，於2013至2014年間利用手提心電圖檢測器為1,581名65歲及以上的長者進行房顫篩查，結果發現當中有110人（7%）患有房顫。研究亦指出本港長者普遍缺乏對房顫的認識，只約有7.7%的長者聽過心房顫動，而知道該病能引起中風的更少於5%。

李詠恩博士表示：「是次研究發現約有7%的長者患有心房顫動，按政府統計處的長者人口數字推算，香港有超過6萬長者患有房顫而未經診斷，可見房顫篩查的重要性。而長者對房顫認識不足，且對藥物存有誤解，更有需要進行藥物教育和個別跟進，以提升治療效果，幫助長者減低中風風險。」

為了主動接觸更多長者作房顫檢查，由師生組成的中大醫學院外展義工隊將由12人擴展至20人，於暑期間到各區長者中心及鄉郊進行外展檢查服務。若長者被診斷出患有房顫，義工隊會立即將之轉介至心臟科，並每三個月定期跟進其狀況。此外，醫學院更



中大醫學院藥劑學院副教授李詠恩博士(右二)與內科及治療藥物學系副教授甄秉言醫生(左二)帶領學生義工為長者進行房顫篩查。



學生義工示範使用手提心電圖檢測器進行房顫檢查。



年屆八十的徐女士(左)在參加房顫篩查後才發現自己患有此症。

計劃於2015年6月及9月進行兩場公開房顫講座，以及舉行「全民防顫日」，推廣防顫意識和提供即場檢查，預計可令5,000名長者受惠。

此外，中大醫學院已獲研究資助局資助，將聯同澳洲悉尼大學進行一項大型心房顫動篩查研究，為威爾斯親王醫院2萬5千名門診長者病人進行篩查。領導研究的甄秉言醫生表示：「研究人員將會利用手提心電圖檢測器為有興趣參與計劃的門診長者病人進行房顫檢查，每人只需少於30秒。確診房顫的病人將被轉介作進一步護理和跟進。我們希望研究能提供數據資料，反映進行大型房顫篩查的可行性和對相關醫療開支造成的影響，並找出一個符合成本效益的預防房顫相關中風方案。」