

Hormone and Bone Tests Indicative of Dialysis Patients' Heart Health



According to a study published in the *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*, bone loss may be a sign of poor heart health in patients on dialysis. Therefore, monitoring bone loss in such patients may provide an early alert to physicians regarding cardiovascular problems.

Patients with chronic kidney disease who are on dialysis often have a build-up of calcium in the arteries around the heart. When this calcification worsens, it can lead to heart disease, a leading cause of death in dialysis patients.

Hartmut Malluche, MD, FACP (University of Kentucky) and his colleagues conducted tests to analyse abnormalities in blood, bone, and heart vessels in 213 patients on dialysis over a 1-year period. "We discovered that high parathyroid hormone and the consequential bone loss are major risk factors for progression of vascular calcifications," said Dr. Malluche. "These two factors were heretofore not appreciated and were independent from traditional known risk factors."

Dr. Malluche also notes that more studies should be conducted to determine the links between calcification levels in bones and those in blood vessels and to find out whether prevention of bone loss will reduce progression of vascular calcifications.

Gustav Blomquist, MD, Marie-Claude Monier-Faugere, MD, Thomas Cantor, and Daniel Davenport, PhD are co-authors of this study.

Source: American Society of Nephrology

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