

Education linked with calcium deposits

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A Northwestern University study suggests higher levels of education are associated with a lower prevalence of coronary artery calcium.

The study was led by Professor Lijing Yan of Northwestern's Feinberg School of Medicine and Peking University.

CAC is an indicator of low-grade or asymptomatic atherosclerosis among young and early middle-age adults.

Previous studies have shown education is inversely associated with a wide array of clinical disease outcomes and death, including cardiovascular disease and coronary heart disease. But little has been known about the relationship between education and subclinical disease -- an illness that remains below the surface of clinical detection.

Yan and colleagues analyzed data from the Coronary Artery Risk Development in Young Adults study, which included 128 participants with less than a high school diploma; 498 were high school graduates; 902 had some college; 764 were college graduates; and 621 had more than a college education.

The prevalence of CAC was four times higher among study participants with less than a high school degree, compared with those who had more than a college education.

The study is detailed in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

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