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Clinical study

# Trends in the incidence of coronary heart disease and stroke and the prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors among Japanese men from 1963 to 1994

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## Abstract

### Purpose

To determine trends in the incidence of cardiovascular disease in Japan, we examined observational data on coronary heart disease, stroke, and cardiovascular risk factors among urban Japanese working men.

### Subjects and methods

The surveyed population included all male employees aged 40 to 59 years who worked

for eight industrial companies in Osaka, the second largest metropolitan city in Japan. Surveillance for cardiovascular disease and risk factors was conducted from 1963 to 1994.

## Results

The age-adjusted incidence of coronary heart disease increased from 0.4 per 1000 person-years during 1963 to 1970, to 1.5 per 1000 person-years during 1979 to 1986, and then plateaued until 1987 to 1994 ( $P$  for trend = 0.002), whereas the incidence of stroke declined from 1.2 per 1,000 person-years during 1971 to 1978, to 0.6 per 1,000 person-years in 1987 to 1994 ( $P$  for trend = 0.02). The age-adjusted mean ( $\hat{\mu} \pm$  SD) total cholesterol level, which was  $4.87 \hat{\mu} \pm 2.88$  mmol/L during 1963 to 1966, increased to  $5.11 \hat{\mu} \pm 0.62$  mmol/L during 1982 to 1983 ( $P < 0.001$ ), and  $5.09 \hat{\mu} \pm 0.75$  mmol/L during 1990 to 1991. Both mean systolic and diastolic blood pressures increased by 1 mm Hg between the periods of 1966 to 1967 and 1982 to 1983, and declined below the 1966 to 1967 levels during 1990 to 1991. The prevalence of smoking declined from 72% during 1975 to 1976, to 58% during 1990 to 1991 ( $P$  for trend  $< 0.001$ ).

## Conclusion

Although these findings were limited to urban middle-aged men, the increase in serum cholesterol is likely to attenuate the reduction in future rates of coronary heart disease in Japan that would have been expected to result from the declining prevalence of smoking.



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