



Over 16 Years of Expats helping Expats

21 May 2017 Non-Communicable Disease (NCD)

Suthep Keeratijareonwong M.D. provided a very interesting talk concerning Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). These are chronic diseases, not passed from person to person. They are of long duration and generally progress slowly. These diseases often severely affect our well-being as we age. However, many of these diseases can be avoided or limited, if we simply observe and correct the negative risk categories, as early as possible!

Dr. Suthep Keeratijareonwong, is a specialist in Cardiology and is a Medical Interventionist and has been working at Bangkok Hospital Pattaya (BHP), Heart Center, since 2007. Dr. Suthep received his MD from the Faculty of Medicine King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, in 1997. He was an Assistant Medical Director, Srikoraphum Hospital, Thailand, from 1997-2004. He received his Internal Medicine Diploma from the Srinagarind Hospital, Khonkaen University, Khonkaen, in 2004; a Cardiology Diploma from the Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University, Bangkok in 2006; and an Interventional Cardiology Diploma from Phramongkutklao Hospital, Phramongkutklao, College of Medicine, in 2007. From 2001 - 2004 he did research as a Site Investigator for Respiratory Failure, in the Intensive Care Unit of Srinagarind Hospital; and from 2004 - 2006 he was a Site Investigator for Pulmonary Hypertension, in Thalassemia, using Tissue Doppler Imaging, at the Ramathibodi Hospital. The doctor was a Medical Professor, Faculty of Medicine, Burapha University, Thailand, from 2010-2013 and is also a Consultant for Intervention, Bangkok Hospital, Rayong, Thailand. He is a Member of the Medical Council of Thailand, the Medical Association of Thailand, the Royal College of Physicians of Thailand, the Heart Association of Thailand, the Thai Society of Cardiac Imaging, and the Cardiovascular Intervention Society of Thailand.



Doctor Suthep first spoke about the causes of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) which includes a person's background, lifestyle and environment. He focused on 6 leading risk factors: 1. Foods, including sweets, salt and fat. What we eat and our nutritional status can affect cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and some types of cancer. 2. Sedentary lifestyle or a lack of regular physical activity which results in higher levels of risk factors, such as obesity, hypertension or diabetes. 3. Stress has long been thought to increase a person's risk of cardiovascular disease or a serious coronary or cerebral events. There is strong and consistent links between depression, social isolation and lack of quality social support and heart disease. 4. Alcohol and cigarette use also have strong links to cancer, cardiovascular disease, liver disease, pancreatitis and diabetes. 5. Inadequate sleeping time increases

the risk of vascular damage and consequences of stroke, myocardial infarction and overall mortality. All the above causes are avoidable and can be remedied with lifestyle changes. The last risk factor is not avoidable... 6. Genetic disorders are caused by errors in genetic information that produce diseases in the affected people. The origin of these genetic errors can be spontaneous errors or mutations to the genome or it may come from inherited genetic errors from parents.

The doctor then detailed the top 6 common diseases, within the non-communicable medical category:

1. Abdominal Obesity occurs when excessive abdominal fat, around the stomach and abdomen, has built up to the extent that it is likely to have a negative impact on health. There is a strong correlation between abdominal obesity and cardiovascular disease. Abdominal obesity has been linked to Alzheimer's disease as well as other metabolic diseases. He showed a simple chart that shows the direct correlation between the food we eat and the calories we burn; the calories we don't burn, turns to fat. Another chart shows the increased percentage of overweight people in the U.S. since the 70's. From 1976 to 1980 47% of people, age 20-74 years, were overweight. By 1988-1994 the number has risen to 56% and by 1999-2002 the number was 65%.

2. Diabetes, specifically Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, is a chronic condition which is largely preventable and manageable but difficult to cure. Management concentrates on keeping blood sugar levels as close to normal as possible. This can usually be with close dietary management, exercise, and use of appropriate medications.

3. Hypertension or high blood pressure is defined as a systolic blood pressure at or above 140 mmHg and/or a diastolic blood pressure at or above 90 mmHg. Systolic blood pressure is the maximum pressure in the arteries when the heart contracts. Diastolic blood pressure is the minimum pressure in the arteries between the heart's contractions. Hypertension is a risk factor for coronary heart disease and the single most important risk factor for stroke. It stresses your body's blood vessels, causing them to clog or weaken. Damage to the arteries can also create weak places that rupture easily or thin spots that balloon out the artery wall resulting in an aneurism.

4. Atherosclerosis or hardening of the arteries is the leading cause of heart attacks, stroke and peripheral vascular disease. The accumulation of the white blood cells is termed "fatty streaks" contain both living, active white blood cells and remnants of dead cells, including cholesterol and triglycerides. The remnants eventually include calcium and other crystallized materials.

5. COPD or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, is a type of obstructive lung disease characterized by long-term, poor airflow. The main symptoms include shortness of breath and cough with sputum production. COPD is a progressive disease, meaning it typically worsens over time. Tobacco smoking is the most common cause of COPD, with factors such as air pollution and genetics playing a smaller role. In the developing world, one of the common sources of air pollution is poorly vented heating and cooking fires. 6. Cancer is preventable up to 30% by avoiding risk factors including: tobacco, overweight, red meats, artificial sugar and preservatives, fried foods, fungal exposure, raw foods, hydrocarbons, artificial colors and stress.

The bottom-line advice is: Correct the risk factors!

6 Top Common diseases

1. Abdominal Obesity
2. Diabetes
3. Hypertension
4. Atherosclerotic disease
5. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; COPD
6. Cancer

