

Chronic pain is much more common among poor, less educated older Americans, than their wealthier, more educated peers, a new study suggested.

Medical expert: Depression leads to brain dysfunction

By Sadeq Dehqan & Farzam Yanaki

Psychological problems and depression have negative impacts on brain function, said the secretary of Sadra Neuroscience Scientific Research Association.

Currently, about 24 percent and up to 17 percent of Iranians are, in a way, suffering from psychological problems and depression, respectively, Reza Panahi told Iran Daily.

He noted that depression is among the gravest problems human being is struggling with in the modern world and era, adding, given this, the World Health Organization has chosen 'Depression' as the theme of its 2017 World Health Day campaign and 'Let's Talk' as its motto.

Panahi added, "Studies show that prolonged depression can severely damage the brain. As in Alzheimer's disease, depression can lead to dementia, brain shrinkage and death of the brain cells and neurons."

Commenting on the impact of happiness on improving brain function, he said there are certain sections of the brain that are stimulated by joy and pleasure and, thus, induce a state of euphoria.

"Eating or, practically, anything else that makes an individual happy, triggers the same process in the brain and leads to an improved brain function."

On the designation of the week from February 17-23 as the week of "Increased Awareness of the Brain", he said this was aimed at raising public awareness about the brain and gaining more knowledge about it to improve its function, accelerate the diagnosis of disorders and diseases — particularly psychological ones and prevent attachment of different labels to patients suffering from brain diseases.

Stressing the importance of greater awareness of the brain and its functions, Panahi noted, "Brain is the main source of our thoughts and feelings as well as all the habits and dispositions that shape our personality. Thus, it is definitely the most important and vital organ of the body to which heightened awareness is required to be given extra attention."

Brain has the most complicated structure known in the universe, he said, adding due to its complexities, compared to other body limbs and organs, scientists have acquired less knowledge about it.

"Progress in treating brain disorders and diseases also lags behind that of other limbs and organs."

He said countries are placing increasing focus on



Reza Panahi (R) talking to Iran Daily reporter.

IRAN DAILY

Exclusive

studying the brain and its function, underlining that currently, brain function researches and studies are the second most-funded projects in the US, next to those of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

"The European Union has also invested €200 billion in the field, which shows the developed countries' awareness of the importance of gaining greater knowledge of the brain."

Expounding on dementia and the brain shrinkage, Panahi said the gradual death of brain cells begins in the earliest stages of the creation of the embryo in mother's uterus, but due to the rapid growth of body limbs and organs in the early years of life, the process is hardly perceptible.

Although brain cells die at a faster pace at the beginning of the third decade of life, it does not imply that the brain loses its efficiency in older ages, he added.

"The brain of a 90-year-old person can function as efficiently as that of a 20-year-old youth, in case he/she takes certain nutrition and hygienic precautions."

Elaborating on the factors contributing to better brain health and activity, he said a large number of people fail to recognize the importance of enough sleep, adding they think that sleeping is a waste of time.

"This is while, many learning processes are completed during sleep. There is a proverb saying 'a sound mind in a sound body'. Studies also show that taking light regular exercises improves brain function. Having a healthy eating plan which includes fruits, vegetables and food containing strong and effective antioxidants also slows aging and reduces brain's vulnerability."

He added there is another proverb which says 'use it or lose it' which is perfectly true for the brain.

Brain's mechanism operates in a way that the more it is used, like body muscles, the stronger it becomes, Panahi said.

On human intelligence, he noted, "Although all humans are born with different genetic and biological bases, no one can overlook the important impact of environment and education on an individual's Intelligence Quotient (IQ) level."

"It is true that Albert Einstein, a German-born theoretical physicist, was an intelligent person from the early years of his life, but ordinary people can also increase their IQ using certain methods and factors. For instance, Richard Feynman, an American theoretical physicist, who managed to win a Nobel Prize in Physics in 1965, acknowledged that he had a normal IQ level — as was shown by the medical exams on him."

Heart, lung problems may not always need ICU attention

The intensive care unit (ICU) may not improve the chances of survival for all patients with serious heart problems, a new study suggested.



hygeia.gr

Study lead author Dr. Thomas Valley said, "We found that the ICU may not always be the answer. Now, we need to help doctors decide who needs the ICU and who doesn't."

He's a pulmonary and critical care researcher at the University of Michigan Medical School, UPI reported.

Researchers examined 1.5 million Medicare records to determine outcomes for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart attack and worsening heart failure. Many patients with these conditions are admitted to an ICU.

There was no difference in 30-day death rates between patients in the ICU and those who received regular inpatient care in another type of hospital unit, the study authors said.

However, ICU care was almost \$5,000 more for patients with worsening heart failure and \$2,600 more for heart attack patients, compared to those in regular care.

There was no difference in cost for COPD patients in the ICU or regular care, the study found.

The researchers also found that ICU patients were more likely to undergo invasive procedures and be exposed to dangerous infections.

"Our results highlight that there is a large group of patients who doctors have trouble figuring out whether or not the ICU will help them or not," Valley said.

Valley emphasized that the findings don't apply to patients who clearly need to be in intensive care, such as those who cannot breathe on their own.

The study was published in the Annals of the American Thoracic Society.

Surprisingly heart-healthy foods

Many of us began the year with resolutions to take the obvious steps to improve our health: Eat more fruits and vegetables, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep.

However, a month or so into 2017, how many of us are still on track with keeping up with these changes? If you've drifted a little, don't worry: February is National Heart Month and is a great time to renew your efforts to take care of your body this year, foxnews.com wrote.

If you are growing tired of all the standard advice and need to shake up your routine, read on for some surprising heart-healthy foods to help restart or reinvigorate your efforts.

Beans: With the exception of a childhood song, beans don't get much attention for their relationship to heart health.

A good source of fiber and potassium, beans are rich in protein and offer an inexpensive, plant-based alternative to meat.

Plus, you don't need to eat a lot of them to benefit. In addition, a literature review of ten studies where participants added beans to their diets found that this change was associated with a reduction in LDL (bad) cholesterol.

Try adding rinsed canned beans to your salad, soups, and stews, or swap beans for meat a few nights a week by serving bean burritos, a bean chili, or a bean and rice dish.

Eggs: Eggs have been the cornerstone of a healthy meal for generations, and for good reason.



foxnews.com

Eggs are an all-natural source of high-quality protein with one large egg containing six grams protein (12 percent daily value), 13 vitamins and minerals, all for seventy calories.

However, for many it's hard to tune out the decades of hearing that eggs, which contain dietary cholesterol, are not great for your heart. But recent research has changed that advice.

For example, one study published in the Journal of the American College of Nutrition suggested that eating one egg a day reduces risk for stroke by 12 percent.

In addition, the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans make no recommendations to limit the cholesterol we eat.

Top your salad with a hardboiled egg or include a side of fresh fruit with your veggie omelet for a heart-healthy, nutrition powerhouse meal.

Papaya: The effects of lycopene (a healthy plant-based compound) on heart disease are well studied, and tomatoes tend to get all the attention as a good source of lycopene in the diet.

While tomatoes do contain this powerful antioxidant that is responsible for its red shade, so do many other fruits and vegetables that come in crimson colors.

One study that looked at the bioavailability of lycopene in tomatoes, carrots, and papaya found that the lycopene from papaya was 2.6 times more bioavailable than that from tomatoes.

While more research is needed to investigate how upping your intake of papaya might benefit your heart, give this tropical fruit a chance by adding it to your snack rotation, smoothies, salads, and parfaits.

Dark chocolate: As if you needed a reason to include chocolate in your diet, here's some delicious news.

A 2015 study that looked at participants with type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure compared the addition of dark chocolate to white chocolate bars in their diets showed that people who ate dark chocolate saw a reduction in their blood pressure compared to the people who ate white chocolate.

The authors attribute this difference to the high polyphenol content of the dark chocolate.

Since chocolate is high in calories and added sugar, most experts agree that the recommended 'dose' of dark chocolate is approximately one to two ounces a day.

Ways to avoid fatty liver disease

Health Desk

Iranians have been recommended to do exercise, avoid unhealthy food and lose excess fat to prevent fatty liver disease, according to studies conducted by Digestive Diseases Research Center (DDRC).

More people have been afflicted by fatty liver disease worldwide in the past

the best way is to undergo an ultrasound test."

Based on a national study, fatty liver disease is more prevalent in the northern provinces of Iran including Mazandaran, Golestan and North Khorasan, he said.

He noted that the prevalence of obesity is higher among those living in the north.



fatty-liver.com

20 years and residents of the north of Iran are no exception.

Dr. Amir Ali Sohrabpour from DDRC said, "More than 30 percent of Iranians suffer from fatty liver disease."

"Hypertension, obesity and high blood sugar are conditions that often lead to fatty liver disease. It greatly raises the risk of heart disease and stroke."

"Biopsy of the liver is among the standard common diagnoses. However,

Sohrabpour pointed out, "At present, Canada, the US, the UK and Austria, have controlled the non-contagious disease."

"Those with fatty liver disease may benefit from weight-loss programs, eating healthy foods and doing exercise."

He warned about side effects of medicines prescribed for fatty liver disease. "The risk of prostate cancer usually increases with the consumption of such medicines."



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Middle East's most comprehensive laboratory for blood typing launched in Tehran

Health Desk

The first comprehensive laboratory for blood typing genotype across the Middle East was inaugurated in Tehran.

This laboratory is on par with molecular laboratories in Europe and the US. It has been equipped according to standards of a molecular laboratory.

Today, the international community and blood transfusion organizations are moving towards defining molecular typing for blood cell antigens.

In addition to other molecular methods, the laboratory is well catered for conducting serologic methods to define blood types.

In addition to its therapeutic role, the laboratory has a well-equipped research center for medical students majoring in blood transfusion, hematology and other related fields.

Blood transfusion centers and hospital blood banks are among the organizations and institutions that can benefit from the facilities offered at the laboratory. They can send divergent blood samples for diagnosing blood types and Rh factor. The laboratory personnel of this equipped research center have undergone rigorous training.