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THE ROLE OF A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE IN THE PREVENTION OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES

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Abstract. This thesis scientifically examines the importance of a healthy lifestyle in preventing cardiovascular diseases. It analyzes the main risk factors contributing to the development of cardiovascular diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, overweight, tobacco use, and the effects of chronic stress on human health. Furthermore, it highlights the preventive significance of a balanced diet, regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy body weight, monitoring blood pressure, and avoiding harmful habits.

Keywords: healthy lifestyle, cardiovascular diseases, prevention, heart health, physical activity, balanced diet, arterial hypertension, risk factors, disease prevention, public health.

Introduction

Cardiovascular diseases are among the most pressing challenges in modern medicine and public health. These diseases include ischemic heart disease, arterial hypertension, cerebrovascular diseases, and other pathological conditions affecting the heart and blood vessels. They negatively affect individuals' quality of life, working capacity, and life expectancy while increasing the social and economic burden on healthcare systems. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 19.8 million people died from cardiovascular diseases worldwide in 2022, accounting for nearly 32% of all global deaths. The development of cardiovascular diseases is associated with both non-modifiable risk factors, such as age and genetic predisposition, and modifiable factors, including unhealthy dietary habits, physical inactivity, tobacco use, excess body weight, elevated blood pressure, and increased blood glucose and lipid levels. Early identification of these risk factors and the implementation of appropriate preventive measures are essential for reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases. In Uzbekistan, strengthening public health, increasing physical activity, and promoting healthy lifestyles are important priorities of public policy. In particular, Presidential Decree No. PF-6099 of October 30, 2020, entitled "On Measures to Promote a Healthy Lifestyle and Further Develop Mass Sports," establishes measures aimed at increasing physical activity, promoting healthy eating habits, encouraging the abandonment of harmful habits, and preventing diseases. This decree provides an important regulatory framework for promoting healthy lifestyles and strengthening preventive healthcare.

A healthy lifestyle plays a crucial role in the primary prevention of cardiovascular diseases. It encompasses dietary habits, physical activity, sleep quality, psychological well-being, and the avoidance of harmful behaviors. The interaction of these factors helps maintain normal cardiovascular function, prevent metabolic disorders, and reduce excessive strain on the heart and blood vessels. According to the World Health Organization, healthy eating, regular physical activity, and tobacco cessation are among the key measures for reducing cardiovascular risk.

Balanced nutrition is particularly important in cardiovascular disease prevention. A diet rich in vegetables, fruits, legumes, whole grains, and healthy sources of fats helps provide essential nutrients and supports overall health. In contrast, excessive consumption of salt, added sugars, saturated fats, and

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trans fats may contribute to elevated blood pressure, excess body weight, dyslipidemia, and other metabolic disorders. Reducing salt intake is especially important for preventing arterial hypertension and maintaining blood pressure within a healthy range. Therefore, promoting nutritional awareness, encouraging informed food choices, and improving the quality of daily diets are essential components of preventive healthcare. Physical activity is another important factor in maintaining cardiovascular health. Regular walking, cycling, swimming, and other aerobic exercises appropriate to an individual's physical condition can improve cardiovascular fitness and help control blood pressure, body weight, and metabolic indicators. The World Health Organization recommends that adults engage in at least 150–300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity per week or 75–150 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity. Increasing physical activity is particularly important for people who lead sedentary lifestyles. Exercise programs should be adapted to an individual's age, health status, and physical capabilities.

Maintaining a healthy body weight and monitoring metabolic indicators are also essential for cardiovascular disease prevention. Overweight and obesity are associated with arterial hypertension, diabetes mellitus, and lipid metabolism disorders. These conditions may collectively increase the risk of cardiovascular complications. Regularly monitoring body weight and blood pressure, as well as checking blood glucose and lipid levels when indicated, can facilitate the early detection of health problems. Periodic medical examinations, particularly for individuals at increased risk, can improve the effectiveness of preventive interventions in primary healthcare settings. Furthermore, tobacco cessation and psychological well-being are important components of cardiovascular disease prevention. Tobacco use damages blood vessels and increases the risk of ischemic heart disease and stroke. Chronic stress may contribute to sleep disturbances, elevated blood pressure, and the development of unhealthy behavioral patterns. Consequently, maintaining an appropriate balance between work and rest, obtaining sufficient sleep, managing psychological stress, and fostering a supportive social environment should be considered integral elements of a healthy lifestyle.

Uzbekistan's public health policies also support these preventive approaches. Presidential Decree No. PF-6099 emphasizes the development of mass sports, encouraging regular walking and physical exercise, promoting healthy dietary habits, and discouraging harmful behaviors. Integrating these measures with primary healthcare services, conducting health education activities in local communities, and improving public health literacy can strengthen cardiovascular disease prevention efforts

Thus, cardiovascular disease prevention should not be limited to medical treatment alone. It requires a comprehensive approach involving individual behavior, family and community environments, the quality of healthcare services, and nationwide health promotion initiatives. Consistently adopting healthy lifestyle practices, identifying risk factors at an early stage, and following evidence-based preventive recommendations are essential for reducing cardiovascular risk and improving public health.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a healthy lifestyle plays a fundamental role in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases and the improvement of public health. The analysis demonstrates that unhealthy dietary habits, physical inactivity, tobacco use, excess body weight, elevated blood pressure, and chronic stress are important modifiable risk factors associated with cardiovascular diseases. Adopting healthy lifestyle practices can help reduce these risks and contribute to the maintenance of cardiovascular health. A balanced diet, regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy body weight, monitoring blood pressure and metabolic indicators, and avoiding tobacco use are essential components of effective cardiovascular disease prevention. In addition, early identification of risk factors and regular preventive medical examinations are important for reducing the likelihood of serious complications. The implementation of Uzbekistan's Presidential Decree No. PF-6099 of October 30, 2020, “On Measures to Promote a Healthy Lifestyle and Further Develop Mass Sports,” provides a policy framework for encouraging physical activity and healthy lifestyle practices among the population. Strengthening health education, expanding preventive healthcare services, and promoting cooperation between medical institutions and local communities can further improve the effectiveness of cardiovascular disease prevention.

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Therefore, cardiovascular disease prevention should be regarded as a continuous and comprehensive process involving individuals, healthcare professionals, communities, and government institutions. The consistent promotion of evidence-based healthy lifestyle practices is essential for reducing cardiovascular risk, improving quality of life, and supporting long-term population health.

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