

Shorter stature may pose higher risk of heart disease

By Gina Kolata, New York Times

To the surprise of researchers who had thought the very notion a joke, an international consortium of investigators reported on Wednesday that shorter stature increases the risk of heart disease.

After gathering genetic data from nearly 200,000 men and women worldwide, the investigators found that each extra 2.5 inches of height brings a 13.5 percent reduction in heart disease risk. The relationship is present throughout the range of adult heights.

A person who is five feet tall has a 30 percent greater chance of developing heart disease than someone who is 5 feet 6, said a lead author of the new study, Sir Nilesh Samani, a professor of cardiology at the University of Leicester in England.

Of course, the increased risk pales in comparison to that caused by smoking, which elevates the odds of getting heart disease by 200 to 300 percent.

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