

Myocardial Infarction

Myocardial infarction (from Greek - Myo: muscle and kardia: heart. Infarction meaning tissue death) is another term for heart attack^[1]. It normally occurs in elderly or obese people.

Causes

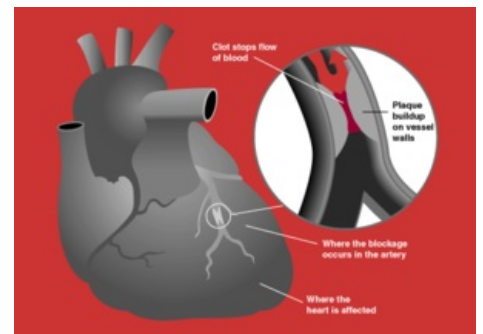
- Atherosclerosis
- Lack of oxygen to the heart muscle
- Clotting at major heart vessels
- Narrowing of coronary artery

Symptoms

- Chest pain (radiating to the left arm)
- Shortness of breath
- Palpitations (irregular heart beat)

Pathophysiology

Myocardial infarction is mainly caused by death of heart tissue mainly due to a blockage in its blood supply. When the heart muscle is weakened or defective, it can cause irregular rhythms of heart beat (arrhythmia) as the heart will not be able to contract properly. This may result in a fast heart beat (tachycardia), for example Ventricular Tachycardia (VT) or cause the heart to be under fibrillation. The process of fibrillation is when the atria or ventricles cannot contract properly as if they were quivering in their contraction. This means that less blood is pumped around the body effectively, which may cause necrosis (premature death of cells) around other parts of the body as less blood reaches those cells.



Clot causing infarction

Links

Related articles

- Atherosclerosis

References

1. Wikipedia.org. *Myocardial Infarction* [online]. ©2011. The last revision 2011-12-03, [cit. 2011-12-10]. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myocardial_infarction>.