

Hong Kong calls for prevention of cerebral small vessel disease to lower stroke risk

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Cerebral small vessel disease might have no obvious clinical symptoms at the initial stage, but it can be detected by brain imaging

The Division of Neurology at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)'s Faculty of Medicine (CU Medicine) conducted brain health evaluations of 550 Hong Kong citizens through a community screening programme between 2019 and 2021, revealing that two-thirds of the participants aged 40-75 suffer from cerebral small vessel disease (CSVD).

In light of the World Brain Day, the research team encourages Hong Kong citizens to control vascular risk factors and to adopt a healthy lifestyle to prevent CSVD, a leading cause of stroke and dementia.

The World Federation of Neurology marked World Brain Day on 22 July with a call to increase public awareness and promote brain health advocacy, reducing the healthcare burden from brain disorders. This year's theme, "Brain Health for all", aims to raise public awareness of the prevention and cure of brain diseases.

Many brain diseases affect the quality of life, including CSVD. It might not cause obvious symptoms in the early stages, but cognitive impairment, depression, walking problems and urinary incontinence can develop as it progresses. Patients can even develop strokes and dementia when it advances further. An international study showed patients with CSVD have a 2.3-times higher risk of developing a stroke, and are nearly twice as likely to develop dementia.