

Acid Reflux Medication Improves Risk of Stomach Cancer, Study Says

A new study published by Gut reported that acid reflux medications could increase the **risk of stomach cancer**. The study connected the use of proton pump inhibitors (PPI) with double risk for stomach cancer. While this is not something new in medical research, scientists have not studied the connection to find clear cause-and-effect answers. The study was started in 2003, and ended in 2015.

The study was conducted toward more than 63,000 adults who underwent treatments acid-inhibitor drugs. The PPI was compared with another acid-inhibitor drug called H2. The result showed increased stomach cancer risk, supposedly caused by bacteria called *Helicobacter pylori*, although the connection between this bacteria and stomach cancer is still unclear.

PPI and Increased Risk of Stomach Cancer

In the long-term study, researchers from University College London and the University of Hong Kong gave PPI to 3,271 patients, while the rest took the H2. The patients who took PPI have been given antibiotics to kill the bacteria. Researchers then constantly monitored them until 2015, or until the patients developed stomach cancer, or died.

From this experiment, 153 people from the PPI-taker group developed stomach cancer, including those who have taken antibiotic with their PPI doses. Patients who took PPI and H2 showed signs of inflammation, which are usually connected with stomach cancer. However, those from the PPI group showed a higher risk of developing inflammation, compared to the H2 group.

Even with antibiotics to kill the bacteria, patients who took PPI still showed inflammation problem in their stomach. Meanwhile, those who took PPI on a daily basis were 4.55 times more prone to develop stomach cancer, compared to patients who took it weekly. The

result showed that bacterial infection might not be the only factor that increases the risk of cancer.

Further studies are needed to find the actual relations between PPI and stomach cancer prognosis, but the study result was enough to warn people about the effects of acid-inhibitor drugs.

Scientists Warn Caution when Using PPI

While the study revealed increased stomach cancer risk with the use of PPI, and even eliminated bacteria as the risk factor, PPI is still used as popular medications. In the UK, there are more than 50 million of PPI prescriptions released every year. However, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine epidemiologist, Prof. Stephen Evans, warned that long-term PPI use might cause various health risks.

PPI works by blocking the works of the acid-producing enzyme in the stomach. However, PPI has stronger effects compared to other acid-inhibitor drugs. Doctors use this medication for conditions such as acid reflux, ulcer, Zollinger-Ellison Syndrome, and other acid-related conditions. Because the acid-blocking function, PPI may increase the rise of dangerous bacteria in the stomach, as well as other effects.

PPI side effects include stomach inflammation, diarrhea, headache, nausea, rashes, flatulence, and fever. Long-term effects not only cause risk of bacterial infection, but also osteoporosis, heart attacks, and deficiencies of magnesium and vitamin B.

In short, while PPI increases the **risk of stomach cancer** and other conditions, people can still take it for their conditions. However, extreme cautions from doctors and patients are necessary to avoid the worst side effects.