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Genetic Predisposition to Cardiovascular Diseases

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ABSTRACT Extensive clinical and statistical studies have identified several factors that increase the risk of heart disease, heart attack and stroke. Major risk factors are those that are associated with a significant increase in the risk of heart and blood vessel disease (CVD). Contributing risk factors are those associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease, but their significance and prevalence haven't yet been precisely determined. A family history of cardiovascular disease is an important factor in the evaluation of a given individual's cardiovascular risk. Behavioral modes common to members of the same family may increase predisposition to cardiovascular disease at an early age and thereby simulate a genetic risk factor. However, a genetic component of cardiovascular risk has been demonstrated, mainly thanks to twin studies. A new generation of genetic risk factors has become apparent in the past decade. Prominent novel genetic factors for CVD, not related to lipids, include high levels of homocysteine, low activity of paraoxonase, and elevated plasma fibrinogen levels.