



Increasing Signs of Heart Disease in Children

Australian cardiologists are more and more worried by the fact that school children are beginning to show signs of heart disease. In Western Australia, children as young as 10 have started displaying such symptoms, which has lead cardiologists to push for Australia's first study on the risks of heart disease among high-school children.

They are putting on weight and being inactive. Diabetes and heart trouble will be seen at an earlier age because of increasing obesity **Dr. Peter Thompson**

Dr. Peter Thompson, of Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, says children and teenagers are at risk of developing health problems only adults are usually confronted with such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes. These problems are the result of the lack of activity and increasing obesity, a trend that now exists in children even at early ages. "We are very concerned about the health of teenagers," Dr. Thompson told the Sunday Times, adding that a study will be conducted starting next year, that is most likely to begin at Busselton Senior High School.

Researchers at the University of WA have looked at children aged from 10 to 16 and have found worrying changes in their arteries. 50 children were under study over a four-year period, and early signs of arteriosclerosis were found in all the children, using ultrasounds.

The research was conducted by Dr. Danny Green and Dr. Katie Watts, of UWA's School of Human Movement, in collaboration with endocrinologists at Princess Margaret Hospital. "We were pretty shocked that kids this young were showing these responses," Dr Green said, adding that the cell changes observed in these children are changes characteristic to adults with heart disease.

The research team also found that these changes were reversible, on condition that the children undertook some aerobic exercise and lightweight training.