

THE TELEGRAPH

ASPIRIN CAN CUT LIVER CANCERS

AND DEATHS

STUDY FINDS

by

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Aspirin can reduce the risk of developing liver cancer or dying from chronic liver disease by around 50 per cent even if only taken monthly, a study has suggested

People who said they had taken aspirin at least once a month in the past year were 49 per cent less likely to develop the most common form of liver cancer and 50 per cent less likely to die from chronic liver disease in the next ten years when compared with people who did not take the painkiller.

Aspirin has been hailed as a wonder drug after several studies have now found that it can significantly reduce the risk of cancer developing as well as cutting the chances of a heart attack and stroke.



*Taking a daily aspirin may prevent
series diseases such as liver cancer*
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The latest research published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute used questionnaires from 300,000 people aged 50 to 71 who reported their own use of a range of painkillers in the previous 12 months and linked them to registers of cancer cases and deaths over the following ten to 12 years.

In that time 250 people developed hepatocellular carcinoma and 428 died from chronic liver disease.

Almost half of cases of HCC occur in people who already have chronic liver disease and both are connected to hepatitis infections, alcohol, certain metabolic disorders and diet.

Lead author Dr Vikrant Sahasrabudhe, from the Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics at the National Cancer Institute, wrote in the journal: "This is the first large-scale, population-based evidence for reduced risks of liver cancer incidence and liver disease mortality associated with the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

"Aspirin, in particular, when used exclusively or with other non-aspirin NSAIDs showed a consistent protective effect related to both HCC incidence and CLD mortality, regardless of the frequency or exclusivity of use."

In an accompanying comment article Drs Isra Levy and Carolyn Pim, both from the Department of Epidemiology and Community Medicine at the University of Ottawa in Canada, said: "The investigators make the promising observation that, in a large, prospective, cohort study, use of aspirin and other NSAIDs was associated with lower risk of death due to chronic inflammatory liver disease, and aspirin use was linked to reduced risk of developing HCC.

"Although the emerging research findings on cancer impacts have not yet translated into clinical recommendations such as those for prevention of vascular disease by the use of daily aspirin, the hype is building.

"Yet enthusiasm among health professionals remains tempered. NSAIDs, including aspirin, are well known to increase the risk of bleeding, especially gastrointestinal bleeding and it behoves those making individual clinical or population-level policy recommendations to carefully consider any potential benefit in light of the concomitant potential for inadvertent harm.

"For these reasons, even for cardiovascular disease prevention, use of aspirin continues to be questioned."

They said many of the causes of liver disease and cancer can be prevented through vaccination and lifestyle and should be considered before medical prevention.

The researchers acknowledged that the most serious side effect of aspirin is stomach bleeding and people with liver problems are especially vulnerable to bleeds. It is not known how many people in the study died from bleeds, they said.

Also they did not know why people were taking aspirin, as it may have been to prevent a heart attack indicating they already had health problems, or the dose they were taking or for how long.

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