

Low cholesterol, risk of dementia are linked: study

Taipei Times · 2 Feb 2026 · 2 · BY TANG SHIH-MING AND JONATHAN CHIN Alzheimer's Research and Therapy, the hospital said.

A study by a Taiwanese doctor found a link between having too little cholesterol in a person's diet and increased risk of dementia, Show Chwan Memorial Hospital said.

The research, which utilized a diagnostic tool known as the History-based Artificial Intelligent Clinical Dementia Diagnostic System, was conducted by the hospital's head neurologist, Chiu Pai-yi (邱百誼), it said.

After studying the medical history of thousands of elderly Taiwanese, Chiu found that excessive and insufficient cholesterol intake were correlated to the onset of dementia — a reversal of received medical wisdom, the hospital said.

The findings applied to unsaturated and saturated fat, or “good” and “bad” cholesterol respectively, meaning people cannot afford to do away with either in their food, it said.

A healthy person should have less than 130 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) of “bad” cholesterol, more than 40 mg/dL of “good” cholesterol and an overall cholesterol intake of about 200 mg/dL, the hospital cited Chiu's study as saying.

A precipitous decline in cholesterol level should be taken as a warning sign of malnutrition, declining health or a symptom of a serious ailment's onset, he added.

Elderly people are urged to not stop taking or changing their cholesterol drugs without medical consultation, and see a doctor for regular checkups if they experience unexplained decreases in weight, appetite or stamina, Chiu said.

The study, which tracked the health data of 2,452 Taiwanese aged 60 years or older for more than three years, was published in the journal