

Subclinical atherosclerosis noted in diffuse scleroderma

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(HealthDay)—Patients with diffuse systemic sclerosis (SSc), without any clinical evidence of cardiovascular disease, have indicators of subclinical atherosclerosis, according to a study published online Aug. 16 in *Arthritis Care & Research*.

To identify signs of early cardiovascular involvement in SSc, Maurizio Turiel, M.D., of the University of Milan, and colleagues conducted a pilot study involving 20 patients with diffuse SSc but no signs of cardiovascular disease, and 20 age- and gender-matched control patients.

The researchers found that arterial wall measurements were significantly different in SSc versus control patients. Compared with controls, in SSc patients, right and left carotid intima-media thickness, pulse wave velocity, and stiffness index were also significantly elevated. Coronary flow reserve was significantly lower and plasma levels of asymmetric dimethylarginine levels were significantly higher in those with SSc compared with healthy controls.

"In conclusion, patients with diffuse SSc seem to

have subclinical cardiovascular involvement, as demonstrated by various methods," the authors write. "Further studies are required to define more precise algorithms for assessing and managing cardiovascular disease in SSc patients."

More information: [Abstract](#)
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