Gout Increases Diabetes Risk, Especially Among Women

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A large population-based study, the first on the question to include women, stratifies an increased risk for type 2 diabetes among gout patients.

Source: Rheumatology Network


People who have gout may contend with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, and women seem more vulnerable than men, according to a large population-based study. The researchers at Harvard Medical School analyzed data from gout patients, and from those without the disease, in the United Kingdom’s Health Improvement Network (THIN) database. They found a higher incidence of type 2 diabetes among men and women with gout (10.1 and 9.5 cases/1,000 person-years, respectively) than among others who do not have gout (5.6 and 7.2 among men and women, respectively).

Factoring in body mass index (BMI) reveals higher hazard rates for diabetes among women with gout than among men (1.71 vs 1.22), a sex difference that persists across all age groups, the researchers say.

Among the gout patients in the study, 74% were men (mean age around 61). The women tended to be slightly older (mean age 68), with slightly higher body mass index. Men were more likely to be current smokers and alcohol drinkers.

A strength of the THIN database is that it represents the general population of the UK, including 7.3 million individuals.

A previous study found diabetes risk higher among men with gout who have high cardiovascular risk profiles. This study, by including women, pinpoints an independent association between gout, type 2 diabetes, and gender, the authors observe.

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