

Subclinical hypothyroidism

Fen-Yu Tseng

Department of Internal Medicine, National Taiwan University Hospital

Subclinical hypothyroidism (SCH) is defined as an elevated thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) level with a normal thyroxine (T4) level. The prevalence of SCH has been reported to be between 4% and 20%. It varies in populations as a function of sex, age, or ethnic group. The proposed adverse consequences of SCH include systemic hypothyroid symptoms, psychiatric symptoms, progression to overt hypothyroidism, and hypercholesterolemia. SCH may impair left ventricular diastolic function, alter endothelial function, increase the C-reactive protein level, and thus increase the risk of atherosclerosis. Being associated with hypercholesterolemia and atherosclerosis, screening and treatment for SCH has been suggested to prevent cardiovascular disease (CVD). The associations between SCH and cardiovascular outcomes and/or mortality are uncertain based on the existing literature. Our study revealed that adult Taiwanese with SCH had an increased risk for all-cause mortality and CVD death.