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Panama: Ischemic Heart Disease

Alexander R. Ligeza

Augustana College, Rock Island Illinois

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PANAMA: ISCHEMIC HEART DISEASE

COUNTRY PROFILE

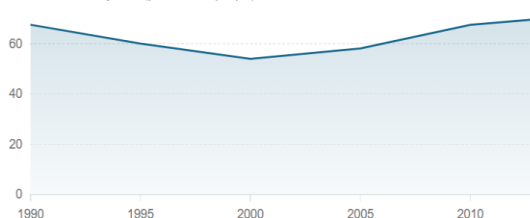
- **Location:** Central America, nestled between Colombia and Costa Rica; borders the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea.
- **Population:** 3,753,142 as of July 2017; ranked 130th in the world in population.
- **Ethnic Breakdown:** 65% mestizo, 12.3% Native American, 9.2% black, 6.8% mulatto, and 6.7% white.
- **Religious Breakdown:** 85% Roman Catholic and 15% Protestant.
- **Languages:** Panamanian English, Creole, English, etc.
- **Government Type:** Presidential Republic; President and Vice President elected by simple majority popular vote on joint ballot. Has Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches.
- **Conflicts:** There are organized illegal narcotics operations taking place, in addition to the presence of 15,000 refugees from Colombia.
- **Public Health Issues:** Panamanian society is plagued by issues such as diabetes mellitus, lower respiratory infections, and various types of cancers, but ischemic heart disease remains the number one cause of health-related deaths.

The World Factbook: PANAMA. (2018, January 17). Retrieved January 26, 2018, from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pm.html>.

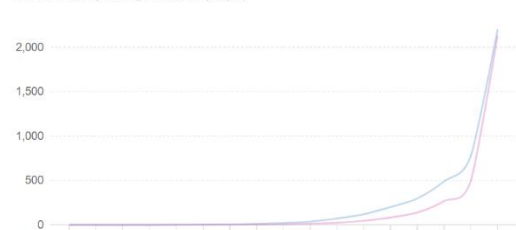
OVERVIEW OF ISCHEMIC HEART DISEASE

- Ischemic Heart Disease is defined as damage or disease in the heart's major blood vessels that is often characterized by reduced or restricted blood (oxygen) flow to the heart.
- In Panama, the mortality rate of ischemic heart disease is 69.7 per 100,000 people.
- Additionally, the annual years of healthy life lost per 100,000 people is 1,130, an increase of 0.1% since 1990 (Ischemic).
- More shockingly, the percentage of years of healthy life lost that can be attributed to risk factors is 94.2% (Ischemic).
- In 2013, the peak mortality rate for men was 2,197 deaths per 100,000 individuals, a rate that was slightly higher than that of women (2,130 per 100,000 people), suggesting that the condition is slightly deadlier in men (Ischemic).

80 Annual Mortality Rate (per 100,000 people)



Annual Mortality Rate (per 100,000 people)



Images from:

Ischemic Heart Disease in Panama. (n.d.). Retrieved December 22, 2017, from <http://global-disease-burden.healthgrove.com/l/42076/Ischemic-Heart-Disease-in-Panama>.

RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH ISCHEMIC HEART DISEASE

- Genetics play the largest role in the possibility of one developing the condition within their lifetime, but many cases can be attributed to specific health choices.
- High consumption of red and processed meats, a staple in the Panamanian diet, can greatly increase the risk of developing ischemic heart disease (Micha, R., Wallace, S. K., & Mozaffarian, D., 2010).
- Those with diets high in both salt and fat also run the risk of developing ischemic heart disease, as these ingredients are largely responsible for the build-up of plaque in arteries (Hollenberg, 1997).
- Over the past few decades, the Panamanian diet has adopted a culture much like that of the United States, characterized by a high volume of processed foods.

IDENTIFICATION AND TREATMENT OF ISCHEMIC HEART DISEASE

- Due to the nature of the condition, no single test is considered comprehensive in identifying it.
- A physician will often catalog a patient's family history, in addition to a physical exam and numerous tests or procedures.
- Although it is a serious ailment, there are many treatment options one can incorporate.
- The most effective form of treatment involves lifestyle changes marked by a change in diet in addition to regular exercise.
- Medications can also offer relief by working to decrease blood pressure and attempting to destroy plaque buildup within the cardiovascular system.
- In more severe cases, a patient may consider receiving an angioplasty or even undergoing surgery.

Nowbar, A. N., Howard, J. P., Finegold, J. A., Asaria, P., & Francis, D. P. (2014). 2014 global geographic analysis of mortality from ischaemic heart disease by country, age and income: statistics from World Health Organisation and United Nations. *International journal of cardiology*, 174(2), 293-298.

INTERVENTIONS

- The first change Panama needs to make involves a change towards a healthier dietary culture on a national scale.
- Additionally, many Panamanians lack an understanding of the condition and are therefore unable to take measures in order to reduce their chances of developing the condition.
- One method that can be implemented to solve the dietary issue is developing a public campaign that promotes the cultivation of gardens and home-grown foodstuffs.
- Additionally, the Panamanian government can work to pass legislation that requires meat processing plants to either work to produce higher quality meats or strive to produce more useful health information on labeling.

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