

**DOES BODYBUILDING DECREASE THE RISK FOR CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES? A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF COMPETITIVE BODYBUILDERS AND HEALTHY SEDENTARY SUBJECTS**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Many epidemiological studies have indicated that aerobic exercise favorably modifies cardiovascular risk factors. But none of the studies were conducted on bodybuilders. In competitive bodybuilding, major emphasis is on aesthetically pleasing and balanced muscular physique. Therefore, bodybuilders require completely different strategies for exercise, weight training, diet and rest than other sports. Hence there is a need to profile a cardiovascular risk pattern amongst them. With this background, the present work was conducted to study cardiovascular risk factors in competitive bodybuilders and compare it with healthy sedentary subjects. 86 competitive bodybuilders in the age group of 20-30 years during their 'bulking phase' of training and 100 non-obese, healthy subjects with sedentary life style were studied. Adiposity predictors like hip circumference, waist circumference, hip to waist ratio and triceps skin fold thickness were measured. Also lipid profile parameters and high sensitivity C-reactive protein (hs-CRP) levels were estimated. Findings indicated that bodybuilders had significantly lower adiposity predictors and lipid profile levels than the sedentary subjects. Level of hs-CRP, which is a novel nontraditional cardiovascular risk factor, was lower in bodybuilders than sedentary subjects. Also the correlation between hs-CRP and other parameters was found to be non significant. Therefore present study concludes that competitive bodybuilders are exposed to lower cardiovascular risk. This risk modulation is not only dependent upon the fat reduction but there may be some other factors which need to be studied in future.*