

First US death in romaine lettuce E. coli outbreak

Frequent sauna use may cut stroke risk: study

WASHINGTON, May 3. (Agencies): People in Finland who regularly take saunas may face a far lower stroke risk than those who go less often, said a study Wednesday.

The report in the journal Neurology is the first to assess the relationship between saunas and strokes, and was based on more than 1,600 people who were followed for an average of 15 years.

Those who spent time in the sauna four to seven days a week showed a 61 percent lower risk of having a stroke than people who went just once a week, it said.

A benefit was also apparent for those who took saunas two or three times a week, with a 14 percent lower stroke risk than those who took saunas once per week.

Researchers found the benefits persisted even after adjusting for other factors that could affect stroke risk, including exercise, high cholesterol, smoking and diabetes.

"These results are exciting because they suggest that this activity that people use for relaxation and pleasure may also have beneficial effects on your vascular health," said study author Setor Kunutsor of the University of Bristol.

"Saunas appear to have a blood pressure lowering effect, which may underlie the beneficial effect on stroke risk."

Researchers cautioned that the study was observational in nature. Since it was based on questionnaire answers, it stopped short of proving cause and effect. Previous studies have linked sauna use to a reduced risk of high blood pressure, dementia and death from cardiovascular disease.

The study enrolled people aged 53 to 74 years in the eastern part of Finland.

Since so few participants never took saunas, researchers could not compare sauna-goers to people who did not use

Breast cancer test failure may have shortened 270 lives in UK

LONDON, May 3. (RTRS): As many as 270 women in England may have died prematurely of breast cancer because of an IT failure that led to 450,000 patients missing out on routine screening appointments.

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt apologised in parliament for the "serious failure," which he said was the result of a mistake in a computer system's algorithm dating back to 2009 but identified only in January this year. He ordered an independent review.

"Our current best estimate, which comes with caveats ... is that there may be between 135 and 270 women who had their lives shortened as a result," he said.

"Tragically there are likely to be some people in this group who would have been alive today if the failure had not happened."

Britain's state-funded National Health Service (NHS), which provides free healthcare to the entire population, is one of the country's

them at all.

In Finland, saunas are so common that many people have them in their homes. Their relative humidity is usually 10-20 percent.

Experts say some people should avoid saunas, including those who recently had a heart attack, those with unstable angina, and elderly people with low blood pressure.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: US health authorities

Around 450,000 women missed out on screening tests



This April 27, 2018 photo shows expiration dates on packets of medicine in New York. Multiple medical groups have urged the FDA to lengthen expiration dates. The federal agency does provide rules for drugmakers to do that voluntarily. However, drugmakers have little financial incentive to do it. (AP)

most popular institutions.

However, it is occasionally hit by failures and scandals which reverberate widely across society as almost everyone receives NHS care throughout their lives.

Under the routine NHS breast screening programme, women aged between 50 and 70 are invited for tests every three years. Around 2 million women are tested every year. The IT error affected some 450,000 women aged between 68 and 71, who should have received their final invitation to a test under the routine programme but did not. Of those, around 150,000 have since died.

More than 300,000 of the remaining women, now aged 70 to 79, will be offered catch-up tests by the end of May, with all tests expected to be completed by the end of October.

"For them and others it is incredibly upsetting to know that you did not receive an invitation for screening at the correct time and totally

devastating to hear you may have lost or be about to lose a loved one because of administrative incompetence," said Hunt.

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in Britain, with more than 55,000 women diagnosed every year and nearly 1,000 dying of the disease every month, according to non-governmental organisation Breast Cancer Now.

"It is beyond belief that this major mistake has been sustained for almost a decade and we need to know why this has been allowed to happen," said Delyth Morgan, chief executive of Breast Cancer Now.

"For those women who will have gone on to develop breast cancers that could have been picked up earlier through screening, this is a devastating error."

The body representing radiologists said the catch-up tests would put even more strain on screening units that were already stretched to the limit due to staff shortages.

Department of Public Health said in a statement.

Last month, US authorities took the unusual step of telling people to throw out any romaine lettuce they had, and not eat it unless they were sure it was not from the Yuma, Arizona area which grows most of the romaine lettuce sold in the country during winter.

Officials still have not identified the source of the outbreak. One Arizona farm has been linked to E. coli in whole head romaine, but at least two dozen lo-

cations are under investigation.

SACRAMENTO, Calif: California health officials say about 100 people statewide have contracted norovirus in the past week after eating raw oysters from British Columbia, Canada.

The state Department of Health issued a warning Wednesday about the possible risk of illness from consuming oysters harvested in south and central Baynes Sound. Canada has reported

more than 170 cases of gastrointestinal illness linked to consumption of raw oysters.

Officials say the number of new illnesses is declining but the investigation is ongoing.

Four oyster farms in British Columbia's Baynes Sound that were linked to illnesses remain closed.

Norovirus is contagious and causes inflammation of the stomach and intestines. Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea and fever.

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