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## U.S. Study Questions Link of Heart Disease To Body's Iron Level

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

ATLANTA — U.S. researchers failed to find evidence to support a report from Finland last year that people with excess iron have a high risk of heart disease.

The Finnish report touched off controversy about the amount of iron added to foods to prevent anemias.

In a report to the scientific sessions here of the American Heart Association, two Baltimore researchers said they studied the records of 48,000 autopsies at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore since 1889. They found 65 adults whose records mentioned they had "iron overload."

"Our hypothesis was if iron is an important risk factor, we would find coronary heart disease when we look at the most severe cases of iron overload," said cardiologist Michael Miller of the University of Maryland Medical Center, who did the study with pathologist Grover M. Hutchins, director of autopsy services at the Baltimore hospital.

They found that only three of the 65 iron-overload patients had clogged coronary arteries. By contrast, when they checked 65 "control" autopsies of persons with no mention of iron overload, they found 11 had clogged coronary arteries.

The researchers also found that the iron-overload patients tended to have relatively low cholesterol. The one iron-overload patient with an unusually high cholesterol level had severe coronary heart disease. They noted that in the Finnish study, people with both higher cholesterol and higher iron seemed to have a higher risk of heart disease.

The U.S. researchers said people who are anemic and need to take iron supplements should do so unless they have high cholesterol.

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