

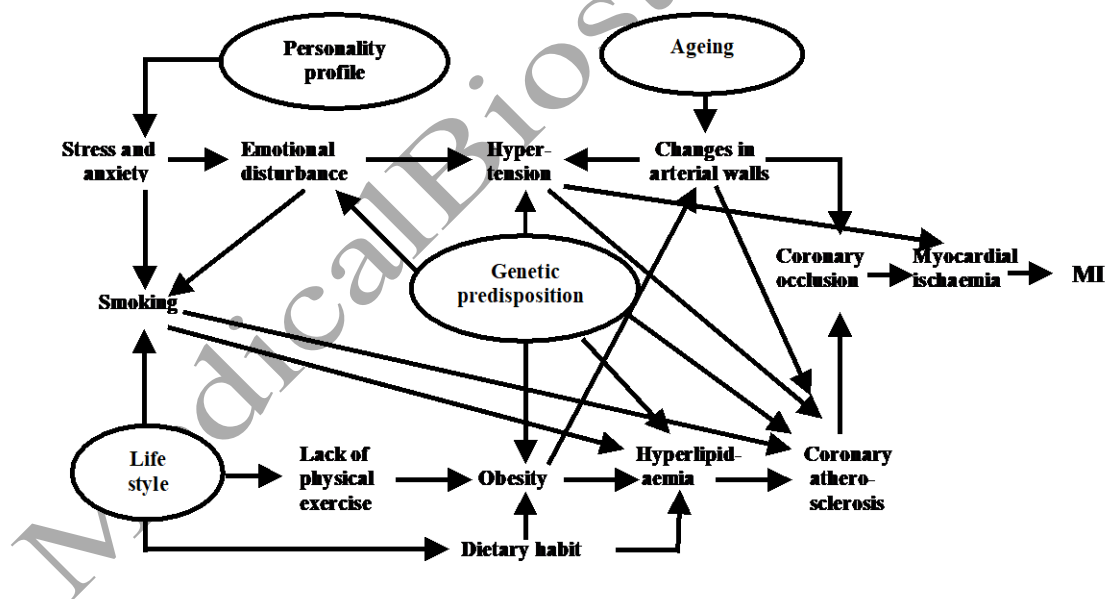
MedicalBiostatistics.com

Etiology diagram

Epistemic uncertainties regarding aetiological factors and their interdependence can be sometimes minimised by using or developing an aetiology diagram of the type developed by Indrayan (20018) for myocardial infarctions (MI) (Figure below). The postulated independent factors are encircled, and the others are shown as a consequence of these factors.

The process leading to MI is intricate, and the representation in this figure is simple. In a way, this is a hypothesis that postulates various ways that an MI can occur. Yet an aetiology diagram such as this has tremendous potential in helping in clinical assessment of a patient, and in proposing strategy for its prevention. The diagram reminds a physician about what to assess in which context, and what intervention can be most effective in a particular case. This knowledge is easily transformed to a research setup where the interest is in working out MI cases, or in control of MI in a community. Thus, some of the epistemic gaps can be plugged.

This figure hypothesizes how various factors may be interacting to give rise to myocardial infarction and illustrates multifactorial etiology as also web of causation.



Suggested etiology diagram for myocardial infarction

REFERENCE

Indrayan A and Malhotra RK. Medical Biostatistics, Fourth Edition. Chapman & Hall/CRC Press, 2018. (<http://Medicalbiostatistics.synthasite.com>)