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CORONARY (BACKGROUNDER)
BY HANIZA TAUFIK

KUALA LUMPUR, JAN 24 (BERNAMA) -- CORONARY BYPASS SURGERY, SUCH AS THE ONE PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD UNDERWENT TODAY, IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMON OPEN HEART PROCEDURES BEING PERFORMED.

THE ARTERY BYPASS INVOLVES THE GRAFTING OF VEINS TO REDUTE BLOOD AROUND A DISEASED ARTERY FROM THE AORTA TO THE HEART MUSCLE.

IN MOST CASES, THE SAPHEMOUS VEIN REMOVED FROM THE THIGH IS ATTACHED TO THE DISEASED ARTERY, ONE END ABOVE AND ONE BELOW THE CLOSSED SECTION, TO IMPROVE BLOOD FLOW AND REDUCE OR ELIMINATE ANGINA (CHEST PAIN).

IF SEVERAL NARROWED SECTIONS ARE REDOUTED, IT IS CALLED MULTIPLE BYPASS SURGERY.

CLOSED AND OPEN HEART SURGERIES HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT AT THE KUALA LUMPUR GENERAL HOSPITAL SINCE 1982

NARROWING OF ARTERIES, WHICH SUPPLY BLOOD TO THE BODY'S VITAL ORGANS, DEVELOPS WHEN FATTY MATERIALS IN THE BLOOD BUILD UP IN THE INNER WALLS OF THESE VESSELS, SAYS CONSULTANT CARDIOLOGIST DR GEORGE D. ANANDA. -- MORE

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THE FATTY DEPOSITS THICKEN AND HARDEN THE ARTERY, REDUCING ITS ELASTICITY AND NARROWING THE PATH THROUGH WHICH THE BLOOD FLOWS.

IF THEY CLOSE A VESSEL SO SEVERELY AS TO CUT OFF BLOOD FLOW ENTIRELY, THE ORGAN OF THE BODY DEPENDENT ON THIS BLOOD SUPPLY DIES.

IN A PAPER PRESENTED AT A SEMINAR, HE SAYS THE CORONARY ARTERIES, THOSE VESSELS CARRYING OXYGEN TO THE HEART, ARE ESPECIALLY PRONE TO BLOCKAGE, OR OCCLUSION.

VERY OFTEN, PEOPLE WITH DISEASE OF THE CORONARY ARTERY EXPERIENCE A PREMONITION OF HEART ATTACK IN THE FORM OF ANGINA PECTORIS, WHICH IS USUALLY FELT AS A PRESSURE SENSATION OR PAIN UNDER THE DREASTBOME OR ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE CHEST, WITH OCCASIONAL SPREAD OF THE PAIN TO THE ARMS OR NECK.

+IT IS YOUR HEART'S WAY OF CRYING OUT, TELLING YOU THAT IT IS GETTING TOO LITTLE OXYGEN BECAUSE OF BLOCKAGE OR NARROWING OF A VESSEL OR VESSELS LEADING TO IT,+ HE ADDS. -- MORE

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UNLIKE OTHER TYPES OF CHEST PAIN, ANGINA GENERALLY OCCURS DURING PHYSICAL EXERTION OR EXCITEMENT, WHEN THE HEART IS DEMANDING MORE OXYGEN THAN USUAL. IT SUBSIDES WHEN THE EXERTION OR EXCITEMENT CEASES.

HEART DISEASE IS REGARDED AS THE NUMBER ONE KILLER IN MALAYSIA. IT INCREASED FOUR-FOLD OVER A 20-YEAR PERIOD, FROM 1,761 DEATHS IN 1964 TO 8,281 IN 1984. -- BERNAMA

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