

# **Belly Fat in Middle Age Raises Dementia Risk**

## **'Spare tire' had strongest association with senility, study found**

THURSDAY, May 20 (HealthDay News) -- A preliminary study suggests that excess fat in the abdomen during middle age boosts the risk of dementia later in life.

An estimated 24.3 million people worldwide suffer from dementia, which can stem from Alzheimer's disease or other causes.

In the new study, Dr. Sudha Seshadri, of Boston University School of Medicine, and colleagues examined the medical records of 733 people with an average age of 60. About 70 percent were women.

The research confirms that increasing levels of body-mass index -- a measurement of whether someone's height and weight are proportional -- in middle-aged people corresponds with lower brain volumes when they are older, Seshadri said in a news release.

"More importantly, our data suggests a stronger connection between central obesity, particularly the visceral fat component of abdominal obesity, and risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease," Seshadri said.

"Our findings, while preliminary, provide greater understanding of the mechanisms underlying the link between obesity and dementia," Seshadri said. "Further studies will add to our knowledge and offer important methods of prevention."