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Risk of deep vein thrombosis: interaction between oral contraceptives and high factor VIII levels

Oral contraceptive use is associated with a significant increase in the risk of venous thromboembolism. It has been previously reported that some thrombophilic alterations such as factor V Leiden and G20210A prothrombin mutation display a synergistic interaction with oral contraceptive use. Heterozygous carriers of these mutations who use oral contraceptives have a 20- to 40-fold higher risk of thrombosis than non-users who have a normal genotype.

High levels of factor VIII are another common risk factor for venous thromboembolism. In this issue, Legnani and co-workers1 show that the risk of venous thromboembolism due to oral contraceptives is increased further in women with elevated levels of factor VIII, and that the raised levels of the coagulation factor and oral contraceptive use likely have a synergistic effect. A few papers on this topic have previously appeared in the journal.2-5 In addition, a Continuing Medical Education quiz in this issue deals with the interaction between oral contraceptives and high factor VIII levels, and the risk of deep vein thrombosis in women (http://cme.haematologica.org/).

References