

## **HEALTH AND LONGEVITY AMONG KURICHIAN: A TRIBAL POPULATION OF KERALA, INDIA**

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High prevalence of coronary heart disease (CHD) in parallel with economic development is observed among South Asian Countries. Evidence from recent epidemiological studies reveals that, antioxidants may reduce the risk of major diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases and cancer. And endogamousness for generations together may reduce the lethality of the recessive alleles. Serum Vitamin E, A, lipid peroxides, prevalence of dislipidemia, hypertension, obesity, smoking habits and ancestral consanguinity were assessed in a volunteer sample of 310 (175 males + 135 females) among the Kurichians, who are enjoying longevity free from age associated chronic problems. Significant negative correlation was observed between vitamins and lipid peroxides. Blood pressure found positive correlation with lipid peroxides and no correlation with vitamins except systolic blood pressure having negative relation with vitamin A. Age showed negative correlation with vitamins and positive correlation with lipid peroxides, whereas lipid peroxides showed positive correlation with obesity only. In multivariate regression analysis serum cholesterol and old age groups were significant predictors of serum antioxidant vitamins and lipid peroxides. No variation observed in the ancestral exogamous and endogamous effects on mortality. The higher levels of antioxidant vitamins, lower levels lipid peroxides as well as low prevalence of CHD risk factors in Kurichians when compared to other populations suggest that antioxidants or increased intake of foods rich in antioxidants play a key role in their health and longevity, and in the presence of favorable heredity. And also, the healthy longevity can be attributed to the stress free economic activities of this population.