Microbleeds Are Associated With Subsequent Hemorrhagic and Ischemic Stroke in Healthy Elderly Individuals

Hirokazu Bokura, MD, PhD; Reiko Saika, MD; Takuya Yamaguchi, MD; Atsushi Nagai, MD, PhD; Hiroaki Oguro, MD, PhD; Shotai Kobayashi, MD, PhD; Shuhei Yamaguchi, MD, PhD

Background and Purpose—Cerebral microbleeds (MBs) are frequently detected in patients with stroke, especially those who experience intracerebral hemorrhage. However, the clinical significance of MBs in subjects without cerebrovascular disease is still unclear. We performed a prospective study to determine whether the presence of MBs provides useful prognostic information in healthy elderly individuals.

Methods—We tracked 2102 subjects (mean age, 62.1 years) over a mean interval of 3.6 years after they voluntarily participated in the brain checkup system at the Shimane Institute of Health Science. An initial assessment was performed to document the presence of MBs and silent ischemic brain lesions and to map the location of the MBs. During the follow-up period, we obtained information about stroke events that occurred in each subject.

Results—MBs were detected in 93 of the 2102 subjects (4.4%). Strokes occurred in 44 subjects (2.1%) during the follow-up period. They were significantly more common among subjects with MBs. Age and hypertension were independent risk factors for MBs. The presence of MBs was more strongly associated with a deep brain hemorrhage (hazard ratio, 50.2; 95% CI, 16.7 to 150.9) than ischemic stroke (hazard ratio, 4.48; 95% CI, 2.20 to 12.2). All hemorrhagic strokes occurred in deep brain regions, and they were associated with MBs located in the deep brain region.

Conclusions—This longitudinal study demonstrated that the presence of MBs can be used to predict hemorrhagic and ischemic stroke, even in healthy elderly individuals. (Stroke. 2011;42:1867-1871.)

Key Words: hypertension ◆ intracerebral hemorrhage ◆ magnetic resonance imaging ◆ microbleeds ◆ prevention ◆ risk factor

Cerebral microbleeds (MBs) are represented on T2*-weighted MRI scans as spotty, low-intensity lesions and are frequently detected in patients with stroke. In patients with intracerebral hemorrhage (ICH) or ischemic cerebrovascular disease, the presence of MBs has a strong predictive value for future recurrent hemorrhagic and ischemic strokes. A recent meta-analysis revealed that MBs were present in 44% of patients with recurrent ischemic stroke and 83% with recurrent ICH. On the other hand, MBs only occur in approximately 5% to 6% of subjects without cerebrovascular disease or neurological symptoms. The occurrence of MBs in healthy elderly subjects is associated with advanced age or chronic hypertension. Although a variety of research has investigated the clinical significance of MBs in patients with stroke, only 1 study to date has examined the long-term prognosis of healthy subjects with MBs.

Even in healthy elderly individuals, silent brain infarctions and subcortical white matter lesions are generally thought to be strong risk factors for subsequent stroke. These asymptomatic ischemic lesions often coexist with MBs in patients with stroke; thus, it is important to understand the individual contributions of these conditions to stroke onset. We performed a prospective study to examine whether MBs and silent ischemic brain lesions are independently associated with subsequent stroke in healthy elderly individuals. Furthermore, the distribution of MBs has lately attracted attention because it may represent distinct underlying vascular pathology; lobar and deep brain MBs are associated with cerebral amyloid angiopathy and hypertensive vasculopathy, respectively. Thus, we further examined the relationship between MB distribution and future stroke events in the same cohort.

Materials and Methods

Subjects
We studied prospectively a total of 2238 consecutive subjects who voluntarily participated in the brain checkup system at the Shimane Institute of Health Science between 2001 and 2007. The screening system entailed collection of medical, neurological, and psychiatric history; family history of stroke; formal neurological examinations...
by an experienced neurologist; neuropsychological testing; MRI of the head; electrocardiogram; chest radiography; and blood tests. The inclusion criteria for this prospective study were as follows: no history of neurological or psychiatric disorders, no abnormalities on neurological examination, no severe medical illness (ie, renal failure, liver dysfunction, or heart failure), and informed consent to this study. The study design including information acquisition from other sources was approved by the institutional ethics committee.

To obtain follow-up information about health conditions, we mailed questionnaires to all subjects on an annual basis. When medical events were reported, we conducted telephone interviews with the subjects and their family members. When vascular events were suspected, we obtained information on all subjects by questioning neurologists in the hospitals they attended about details of the events, including brain imaging results. On the basis of the information obtained from these sources, we determined the stroke type, that is, cerebral infarction, transient ischemic attack, ICH, or subarachnoid hemorrhage. Cerebral infarction was further classified using the Trial of ORG 10172 in Acute Stroke Treatment criteria.\footnote{12} The final analysis included only those subjects with whom we could follow-up for at least 1 year after the initial examination; we were able to obtain a follow-up ratio of 93.9% with a total of 2102 subjects (1126 men and 976 women) with a mean age of 62.1 (8.0) years (range, 31 to 87 years).

See http://stroke.ahajournals.org for the methods of acquiring demographic and laboratory data and MRI data.

### Statistical Analysis

To make comparisons between groups, we used Student t test (parametric data) and Mann-Whitney \( U \) test or the \( \chi^2 \) test (nonparametric data). Probability values were 2-tailed, and significance was defined as \( P<0.05 \). A logistic regression analysis was performed to examine risk factors for asymptomatic brain lesions; the variables included age, sex, family history of stroke, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, ischemic heart disease, smoking, and alcohol consumption. Cumulative stroke-free rates were estimated by the Kaplan-Meier product-limit method, and the curves of the different groups were compared using the log-rank test. To assess the impact of MBs on the incidence of ischemic and hemorrhagic strokes, the hazard ratio and 95\% CI of symptomatic stroke events during the follow-up period were calculated using the Cox proportional hazards model with a stepwise variable selection with adjustments for age and sex. Variables with \( P>0.10 \) were removed from the stepwise model.

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**Table 1. Risk Factors for Asymptomatic MRI Lesions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>MBs OR (95% CI)</th>
<th>SBI OR (95% CI)</th>
<th>PVH OR (95% CI)</th>
<th>SWML OR (95% CI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age per 1 y</td>
<td>1.08 (1.04–1.12)</td>
<td>1.09 (1.07–1.11)</td>
<td>1.11 (1.07–1.15)</td>
<td>1.10 (1.08–1.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex, male</td>
<td>1.46 (0.77–2.78)</td>
<td>1.61 (1.06–2.46)</td>
<td>0.80 (0.41–1.56)</td>
<td>0.86 (0.58–1.25)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hypertension</td>
<td>4.21 (2.20–8.08)</td>
<td>2.27 (1.62–3.19)</td>
<td>1.54 (0.91–2.61)</td>
<td>2.03 (1.50–2.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes mellitus</td>
<td>1.14 (0.52–2.51)</td>
<td>1.52 (0.96–2.41)</td>
<td>1.66 (0.82–3.36)</td>
<td>0.76 (0.46–1.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family history of stroke</td>
<td>0.93 (0.55–1.57)</td>
<td>1.09 (0.79–1.52)</td>
<td>2.04 (1.17–3.54)</td>
<td>1.31 (0.97–1.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ischemic heart disease</td>
<td>1.96 (0.91–4.22)</td>
<td>1.09 (0.62–1.94)</td>
<td>1.39 (0.63–3.11)</td>
<td>1.51 (0.91–2.50)</td>
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<td>Smoking</td>
<td>0.55 (0.28–1.06)</td>
<td>1.03 (0.69–1.54)</td>
<td>1.07 (0.55–2.10)</td>
<td>1.11 (0.75–1.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol habit</td>
<td>1.45 (0.68–3.07)</td>
<td>1.18 (0.75–1.86)</td>
<td>1.32 (0.63–2.80)</td>
<td>1.07 (0.69–1.69)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results were analyzed by use of a logistic regression analysis.

MBs indicates microbleeds; SBI, silent brain infarction; PVH, periventricular hyperintensity; SWML, subcortical white matter lesion.

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**Figure.** Kaplan-Meier curves of the stroke-free survival rate stratified by presence or absence of microbleeds (MBs).
Results

MBs were detected in 93 of 2102 subjects (4.4%). They were located in the deep brain regions of 56 subjects (52.7%), in the lobar region of 10 subjects (12.9%), and in both regions of 27 subjects (34.4%). Other silent lesions were also fairly common: silent brain infarction was found in 262 subjects (12.5%); periventricular hyperintensity (+) in 105 subjects (5.0%); and subcortical white matter lesion (+) in 358 subjects (17.5%). Results of the logistic regression analysis indicated that age and hypertension were independent risk factors for all asymptomatic brain lesions (Table 1).

The average follow-up period was 3.6 (1.7) years, during which 12 subjects died from critical illness, including cancer and ischemic heart disease, and 1 subject died from ICH. Stroke occurred in 44 subjects (2.1%), including 22 subjects with cerebral infarctions, 10 with ICH, 4 with subarachnoid hemorrhages, and 8 with transient ischemic attack. We classified 22 cases with cerebral infarction according to the Trial of ORG 10172 in Acute Stroke Treatment criteria: 5 hemorrhagic types during the follow-up period. On the other hand, all 18 subjects who had strokes had MBs in the deep brain region; in 50% of these cases, subjects also had MBs in the lobar region. Location of MBs (eg, deep brain region only or both deep brain and lobar regions) did not have a significant influence on whether patients had ICH or ischemic strokes. However, the presence of MBs was an even more potent risk factor for ICH (hazard ratio, 50.2; 95% CI, 16.7 to 150.9, P<0.0001). Other factors were not associated with future stroke events.

Among 18 subjects with MBs followed by strokes, 9 were associated with hemorrhagic strokes and 9 others with ischemic strokes. No subjects with MBs restricted to the lobar region experienced strokes for either ischemic or hemorrhagic types during the follow-up period. On the other hand, all 18 subjects who had strokes had MBs in the deep brain region; in 50% of these cases, subjects also had MBs in the lobar region. Location of MBs (eg, deep brain region only or both deep brain and lobar regions) did not have a significant influence on whether patients had ICH or ischemic strokes. ICH occurred in 4 subjects with MBs in the deep brain region and in 5 subjects with MBs in both deep brain and lobar regions. Similarly, ischemic strokes also occurred in 5 subjects with MBs in the deep brain region and in 4 subjects with MBs in both deep brain and lobar regions.

Table 3 presents the clinical characteristics and MRI findings of subjects (n=10) who had ICH during the follow-up period. In the initial assessment, 9 of these patients were found to have MBs. A hemorrhage occurred in the putamen in 5 subjects, in the thalamus in 4 subjects, and in the cerebellum in 1 subject. All these individuals had hypertension, except for 1 who had diabetes mellitus.

We failed to obtain follow-up data from 136 subjects, among whom 5 (3.7%) had MBs at the initial examination. The demographic data and all MRI findings, including MBs,
in these subjects lost to follow-up were not statistically different from those in subjects included in the analysis.

**Discussion**

In the current study, subjects who had MBs were 5 and 50 times as likely to experience ischemic stroke and ICH, respectively, than those who did not have MBs. Thus, the presence of MBs is a strong independent risk factor for subsequent strokes, even in subjects without a history of cerebrovascular disease. These results are much more dramatic than those of a previous study, which found that patients with MBs were 7 times more likely to develop ICH than those without MBs. Follow-up studies were conducted to investigate whether MBs have a higher association with hemorrhagic or ischemic future stroke. However, most of these studies were hospital-based and included subjects who had already experienced symptomatic hemorrhage or infarction. Furthermore, the results of these studies were conflicting: 2 that focused on a small group of patients with stroke demonstrated a significant association between MBs and subsequent ICH, whereas the third study found that MBs were associated with future ischemic but not hemorrhagic stroke.

A recent longitudinal study demonstrated for the first time that the presence of MBs was a predictor for first-ever symptomatic cerebrovascular events in subjects without a history of symptomatic stroke. Subjects from that study had a much higher prevalence of MBs (17%) than was recorded in the focal group of the present study (4.4%) and a correspondingly higher overall stroke incidence rate (34.0 versus 20.9 per 1000 person-years, respectively). This is likely because the previous study group included individuals who were at a high risk of stroke, whereas we examined relatively healthy patients. Regardless, 1 commonality between the previous and current research was the finding that MBs strongly predicted the occurrence of future cerebral infarctions in subjects without cerebrovascular disease. However, in the previous study, this relationship did not persist after adjustment for age, sex, and hypertension. Because we obtained a larger sample size, and therefore had higher statistical power, our results offer more persuasive evidence of an association between the presence of MBs and the occurrence of future ICH, even after adjustment for clinical variables.

The distribution of MBs seems to be an important factor influencing the risk of ICH. Generally, MBs in the basal ganglia or thalamus are thought to be related to hypertensive or arteriosclerotic microangiopathy. Wardlaw et al reported that MBs were observed more frequently in lacunar stroke than in cortical stroke and were associated with a higher incidence of white matter lesions. Cumulatively, these findings support the notion that MBs and lacunar stroke have a common pathological background such as small-vessel diseases. In agreement with this view, 9 of 10 subjects with MB-associated ICH experienced a hemorrhage in the putamen, thalamus, or cerebellum in the present study (Table 3).

It is important to note that MBs were found in the lobar region in some subjects and that this type of MB has a distinct pathogenesis from that in the deep brain region. Lobar MBs may be related to cerebral amyloid angiopathy, which is a major cause of lobar ICH in elderly persons. None of our subjects experienced a lobar hemorrhage due to CCA, probably because there were very few elderly subjects who were ≥80 years old in our study (3.6% of all patients). Moreover, MBs are often found in patients with dementia such as Alzheimer disease or cerebral autosomal-dominant arteriopathy with subcortical infarcts and leukoencephalopathy. Further longitudinal studies are needed to investigate whether the presence of lobar MBs is related to the occurrence of ICH in lobar regions.

We observed MBs in 4.4% of the study subjects. This rate is lower than that reported in the Rotterdam Scan Study (23.5%). However, the prevalence of MBs in the present study was similar to that documented by the Framingham study (4.7%) and Roob’s report (6.4%). The prevalence of MBs depended on the characteristics of the cohort, particularly clinical status and age distribution. Thus, the discrepancy between our statistics and those reported in the Rotterdam Scan Study probably stems from the fact that the latter included subjects with a history of cerebrovascular disease and examined patients who were older (mean age, 69.6 years) than those studied here (mean age, 62.1 years). Furthermore, detection of MBs may be more important in Japan than in Western countries, because the proportion of ICH in population-based studies accounted for approximately 20% of all stroke cases in Japan and was different from the incidence (≤10% of ICH) in Western countries. Deep brain hemorrhage is more common than lobar hemorrhage, and it has been reported that the former accounted for 83% of all ICH cases in Japan.

There are several limitations to the present study. First, we were unable to obtain information about medical treatment during the follow-up period. Specifically, we were unable to investigate the potential importance of antithrombotic medication, which may increase the risk of hemorrhagic events in patients with MBs. Second, because the primary follow-up method relied on mailed questionnaires, we were also unable to collect data on the control state of blood pressure and glucose level. Third, we did not obtain follow-up data from 136 subjects who were lost to follow-up at a constant rate, although their demographic data, including MRI findings at the initial examination, were comparable to those of other subjects. Finally, our subject selection may have been biased, because all subjects were recruited from a group of individuals who voluntarily participated in the brain checkup system. These individuals may have had different demographic characteristics (eg, motivation to seek health care and economic level) than subjects included in other population-based cohort studies.

**Conclusions**

The presence of MBs is a strong risk factor for subsequent ischemic stroke and ICH, even in healthy elderly individuals. To prevent stroke, subjects with MBs should carefully manage risk factors. Specifically, because all subjects who experienced stroke after presenting with MBs also had hypertension, patients with MBs should be treated with intensive antihypertensive medication to prevent subsequent ischemic or hemorrhagic stroke.
Sources of Funding

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Disclosures

None.

References

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SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL
Title: Microbleeds are associated with subsequent hemorrhagic and ischemic stroke in healthy elderly individuals

Supplemental Methods

Acquisition of demographic and laboratory data
At the initial examination, blood samples were taken after an overnight fast to measure glucose levels and HbA1c. Blood pressure was measured three times after a 15-min resting period, and the mean of these values was used in all further analyses. Hypertension was defined as a systolic blood pressure $\geq$ 140 mm Hg, a diastolic blood pressure $\geq$ 90 mm Hg, and/or a history of hypertension with anti-hypertension therapy. Diabetes mellitus was defined as a fasting serum glucose level $\geq$ 126 mg/dl, hemoglobin A1c level $\geq$ 6.5%, or a medical history of diabetes mellitus. A smoker was defined as any subject whose smoking index exceeded 200. Regular alcohol consumption was defined as more than 58 ml of alcohol consumed per day.

MRI
MRI examinations were performed during the first visit, using a 1.5-Tesla MRI (Symphony Ultra Gradient, Siemens). The entire head of each patient was scanned using a T2-weighted image (T2WI) pulse sequence (TR = 4500 ms, TE = 86 ms), T1-weighted image (T1WI; TR = 2500 ms, TE = 3.9 ms), FLAIR images (TR = 8000 ms, TE = 92 ms), and gradient-echo T2*-weighted images (T2*WI; TR = 670 ms, TE = 25 ms, flip angle = 20°) in the transverse plane, and T1WI in the coronal plane, with a slice thickness of 7 mm.

MBs and other asymptomatic ischemic brain lesions
In T2*WI, MBs were defined as 2- to 10-mm in diameter homogenous round foci of signal loss that were 2- to 10-mm in diameter. MB distribution was classified as occurring in either the deep brain region (including the basal ganglia, thalamus, brain stem, and cerebellum), or the lobar region (including the cerebral cortex and subcortical white matter). SBI was defined as a focally hyperintenseity lesion larger than 3 mm in diameter in the T2WI, corresponding to a hypointenseity lesion in the T1WI. FLAIR images were used to differentiate infarcts from enlarged perivascular spaces. These were distinguished from SBI based on the basis of their size and location: enlarged perivascular spaces are often observed around the perforating or medullary arteries in
the lower third of the basal ganglia. Periventricular hyperintensity (PVH) was graded on a scale of 0 to 4, where 0 = very little or unclear PVH, 1 = thin but apparent PVH restricted to the frontal horn, 2 = smooth PVH surrounding the entire lateral ventricle or horn, 3 = thick, irregular PVH surrounding the lateral ventricle and horn, and 4 = marked diffuse PVH. SWML was graded on a scale of 0 to 3 according to the Fazekas’ grading scheme, where 0 = absent, 1 = punctate, 2 = beginning of confluence, and 3 = confluence. PVH and SWML were evaluated separately because PVH is found adjacent to the ventricles, while SWML is found separate from them. We defined PVH grades 0–2 as “PVH (−)” and grades 3–4 as “PVH (+)”; similarly, SWML grades 0–1 were defined as “SWML (−)”, and grades 2–3 were termed “SWML (+)”. All MRI findings were read and determined separately by an experienced neurologist and neuroradiologist who were blind to patients’ profiles. When their opinions were inconsistent, a second neurologist was brought in for consultation.

Supplemental Reference


健常高齢者の微小出血はその後の出血性・虚血性脳卒中
と関連がある

Microbleeds Are Associated With Subsequent Hemorrhagic and Ischemic Stroke in Healthy Elderly Individuals

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1 Department of Neurology, Faculty of Medicine, Shimane University; and 2 Shimane University Hospital, Izumo, Japan

背圧および目的: 脳卒中患者、特に脳内出血をきたした患者には、脳内微小出血(MB)が認められることが多い。しかし、脳血管疾患のない人々にみられる MB の臨床的意義は不明である。我々は前向き研究を実施し、MB の存在が健常高齢者における有用な予後情報となるか否かを検討した。

方法: 島根県病院研究所で自動的に脳検診を受けた 2102 例(平均年齢: 62.1 歳)を対象に、平均 3.6 年間の追跡調査を実施した。初期評価により MB および無症候性の脳虚血病変の存在を確認し、MB の位置をマッピングした。追跡調査期間中に、各被験者に生じた脳卒中イベントに関する情報を収集した。

結果: 2102 例中 93 例 (4.4%) に MB が認められた。追跡調査期間中に 44 例 (21.2%) が脳卒中を発症した。MB を有する被験者群は脳卒中発症率が有意に高かった。MB の独立した危険因子は年齢および高血圧であった。MB の存在は、虚血性脳卒中(ハザード比 = 4.48、95% CI: 2.20 ~ 122)よりも深部脳出血と一層強く関連していた(ハザード比 = 50.2、95% CI: 167.1 ~ 1509)。出血性脳卒中はいずれも深部で生じており、脳深部に位置する MB と関連していた。

結論: 健常高齢者であっても、MB の存在は出血性・虚血性脳卒中の予測因子となることが、本研究で実証された。

Stroke 2011; 42: 1867-1871

KEYWORDS
高血压、脳内出血、磁気共鳴画像法、微小出血、予防、危険因子

T2* 強調 MRI スキャンでは、脳内微小出血(microbleed: MB)は斑点状の低信号病変として示され、脳卒中患者に観察されることが多い。脳内出血(intra-cerebral hemorrhage: ICH)患者または虚血性脳血管疾患患者の場合、MB の存在によって高い適中率で将来的な出血性脳卒中や虚血性脳卒中再発が予測できる4). 最近実施されたメタアナリシスでは、虚血性脳卒中再発患者の 44%、ICH 再発患者の 83% に MB が認められることが示されている3). 一方、脳血管疾患や神経症候のない人々では、MB 出現率は 5 ~ 6% 程度にすぎず4), 健常高齢者における MB 出現は加齢や慢性高血圧と関連がある5). 脳卒中患者における MB の臨床的意義については、さまざまな研究が実施されているが、MB を有する健常者の長期予後に検討した研究はこれまでに 1 件しかないとされている7).

一般に、健常高齢者の場合でも、無症候性脳梗塞や皮質下出血性病変は、将来的な脳卒中発症の有力な危険因子であると考えられている8). 脳卒中患者では、こうした無症候性の虚血性病変と MB が併存することが多く9), したがって、これらの病変がそれぞれ脳卒中発症にどのように寄与しているかを理解することは重要である。我々は、健常高齢者にみられる MB および無症候性脳虚血病変と、将来的な脳卒中発症の間に独立した関連があるか否かを検討するため、前向き研究を実施した。さらに MB の分布はその基盤に、それぞれ個別な血管病理が存在することを示していると考えられ、近年注目を集めている。脳葉の MB は脳アミロイド血管症と、脳深部の MB は高血圧性血管症とそれぞれ関連がある10). そこで同じコホートを用いて、MB の分布を将来的脳卒中のイベントの関係を詳しく検討した。

材料および方法

被験者

2001 ～ 2007 年に島根県病院研究所で自動的に脳検診を受け、連続 2238 例を対象に前向き研究を実施した。検診には、内科的、神経学的、精神医学的病歴および脳卒中の家族歴の収集、経験豊富な神経内科医による正規の神経学的検査、神経心理学的検査、頭部 MRI、心電図、胸部 X 線検査、血液検査が含まれていた。この前向き研究の組入れ基準は以下通りである：神絞性疾患および精
表1 無症候性的MRI病変の危険因子

<table>
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<tr>
<th>変数（1歳あたり）</th>
<th>サイジオ95%信頼区間</th>
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<th>p値</th>
<th>OR(95% CI)</th>
<th>p値</th>
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<td>0.0001</td>
<td>1.11 (1.07～1.15)</td>
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<td>0.05</td>
<td>1.54 (0.91～2.61)</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>2.03 (1.50～2.74)</td>
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<td>0.0001</td>
<td>2.27 (1.62～3.19)</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>1.66 (0.82～3.36)</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.76 (0.46～1.26)</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>糖尿病</td>
<td>1.14 (0.32～2.51)</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>1.52 (0.96～2.41)</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>2.04 (1.15～3.54)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>1.31 (0.97～1.77)</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>脳卒中家族歴</td>
<td>0.93 (0.55～1.57)</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>1.09 (0.79～1.52)</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>1.39 (0.63～3.11)</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>1.51 (0.91～2.50)</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>虚血性心疾患</td>
<td>1.96 (0.91～4.22)</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>1.09 (0.62～1.94)</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>1.07 (0.55～2.10)</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>1.11 (0.57～1.64)</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>風邪</td>
<td>0.55 (0.28～1.06)</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>1.03 (0.69～1.54)</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>1.32 (0.63～2.80)</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>1.07 (0.69～1.69)</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>飲酒</td>
<td>1.45 (0.68～3.07)</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>1.18 (0.75～1.86)</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>1.32 (0.63～2.80)</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>1.07 (0.69～1.69)</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

結果の分析にはロジスティック回帰分析を利用した。

正常: 魚小脳出血、SBI: 無症候性脳梗塞、PVH: 脳卒中高リスク群、SWML: 皮質下白質病変。
あらゆる無症候性脳病変の独立した危険因子であることが示された（表1）。

平均追跡調査期間は3.6（1.7）年で、この間に癌および虚血性心疾患を含む重症疾患により12例が死亡し、1例がICHにより死亡した。44例（2.1%）が脳卒中を発症し、このうち22例は脳梗塞、10例はICH、4例は頭部外傷、8例は一過性脳虚血発作であった。

TOAST基準に従って脳梗塞症例22例を分類した結果、5例は大血管アテローム性病変、3例は心原性脳塞栓症、12例は小血管閉塞、2例は評価不十分な脳卒中であった。MBのある被験者[18例（19.4%）]はMBのない被験者[26例（13.0%）]に比べて、脳卒中発症頻度が有意に高かった（p＜0.0001）。Kaplan-Meier法とログランク検定を用いて無脳卒中率曲線を作成した（図）。臨床的脳卒中の頻度は、MBのない被験者よりもMBのある被験者の方が有意に高かった（p＜0.0001）。

脳卒中と脳卒中発症と関連を調べたCox比例ハザードモデルの結果を表2に示す。予測因子変数として、MB、無症候性脳梗塞、脳卒中家族歴、高血圧、糖尿病、虚血性心疾患、喫煙、飲酒をステップワイズ回帰モデルに含めた。MBの存在（ハザード比＝4.48、95%CI：2.20～12.2、p＜0.0001）と無症候性脳梗塞（ハザード比＝2.94、95%CI：1.26～6.8、p＝0.012）はともに脳虚血性脳卒中の有意な危険因子であったが、MBの方がはるかに有力な予測因子であった。ただし、MBの存在はICHのさらに強力な危険因子であった（ハザード比＝50.2、95%CI：16.7～150.9、p＜0.0001）。

他の因子と脳卒中イベントとの関連はみられなかった。

MBを有し、脳卒中をきたした被験者18例のうち、9例は出血性脳卒中、残る9例は虚血性脳卒中であった。脳卒中発症期間中、MBが脳葉領域のみに限定されていた被験者には虚血性脳卒中出血性脳卒中も生じなかった。これに対し、脳卒中をきたした18例いずれも深部脳領域にMBが存在しており、このうち50%は脳葉領域にもMBが認められた。MBの位置（深部脳領域のみ、深部脳領域と脳葉領域の両方など）は、ICHが虚血性脳卒中からの違いに有意な影響を及ぼしていなかった。深部脳領域

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>変数</th>
<th>虚血性脳卒中</th>
<th>ICH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HR (95% CI)</td>
<td>p 値</td>
<td>HR (95% CI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MB あり</td>
<td>4.48 (2.20～12.2)</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBI あり</td>
<td>2.94 (1.26～6.8)</td>
<td>0.012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

結果の分析には、年齢および性別について補正したステップワイズCox回帰を用いた。ICH：頭蓋内出血、HR：ハザード比。

本研究では、MBを有する被験者はMBのない被験者に比べて、虚血性脳卒中発症リスクが5倍、ICH発症リスクが50倍高かった。このように、脳血管疾患の既往のない人々においても、MBの存在は将来の脳卒中の有力な独立した危険因子である。本研究結果は過去の研究成果に比べてはるかに信頼的であり、過去の研究では、MBのある患者のICH発症リスクはMBのない患者の7倍であったが、本研究ではMBを有する被験者のICH発症リスクはMBのない被験者の2.1倍にすぎなかった。将来の出血性脳卒中または虚血性脳卒中かどうかがMBにより強く関連しているかについては、複数の追跡調査研究が行われているが、ほとんどの研究は病院をベースにしており、被験者はすでに症候性の出血や梗塞をきたした患者であった。さらに研究結果にも不一致がみられる。2件の研究では、少数の脳卒中患者群においてMBと将来のICHとの間に有意な関連が認められたが、もう2件の研究では、MBと将来の虚血性脳卒中との間には関連がみられなかった。最近実施された総合研究において、症候性脳卒中の既往のない人々にみられるMBが、症候性脳血管イベント初発の予測因子であることが初めて示された。この研究
の被験者は、今回の研究の中核群に比べてMBの頻度がはるかに高く(それぞれ17%, 4.4%), それに呼応して脳卒中の全発症率も高かった(それぞれ1,000人/年あたり34.0件, 20.9件)。これはあり得ることである。なぜなら、上記の研究の被験者集団には脳卒中の高リスク者が含まれていたが、我々の研究の被験者は比較的健康的者であったからである。いずれにしても、以前の研究と今回
の研究に共通していることは、脳血管疾患のない人々にみられるMBが、将来の脳梗塞発症の有力な予測因子であるという所見である。ただし、以前の研究では、年齢、
性別、高血圧について補正を行った結果、両者の間に関
係は認められなくなった。本研究は以前の研究よりも被
験者数が多く、したがって、統計学的検出力も高かった
ため、臨床的変数の補正を行った後も、MBの存在と将来
のICH発症との関連についてより説得力のある証拠が示
された。

MBの分布は、ICHリスクに影響を及ぼす重要な因子であると思われる。一般に、大脳基底核または視床のMBは、高血圧性または動脈硬化性微小血管症に関係していると考えられている。Wardlawらは、皮質脳卒中よりもラクナ梗塞の方がMBが観察される頻度が高く、白質病変の発症率が高くなると報告している15。これに総合すると、これらの所見は、MBとラクナ梗塞の間に小血管病変とその共通する病理学的背景が存在するという考えを裏づけている17。同様に本研究でも、ICH発症例10例のうち、MBを伴う9例では視床、視床、脳幹に出血が認められた(表3)。

注意しなければならないのは、一部の被験者において
脳卒中MBが認められたこと、この種のMBの発生
病理解深部脳領域のMBとは明確に異なることである18。脳卒中MBは脳アミロイド血管症と関係があると思われ
る19。脳アミロイド血管症は、高齢者にみられる脳卒中
ICHの主な原因の1つである。本研究の被験者には、脳
アミロイド血管症に起因する脳卒中出血はみられなかった
が、これはおそらく、本研究では60歳以上の長期間研究
が行われた少ないこと(全体の3.6%)ためであると思われる。
さらに、MBはアルツハイマー病20や、皮質下梗塞
および白質脳症を伴う常染色体優性遺伝性脳動脈症2122
などの知症症候群にも見られることが多い。脳卒中MBの
存在が脳卒中におけるICH発現と関係しているか否か
については、さらに詳しい検証が必要である。

本研究では、脳卒中の4.4%にMBが観察された。この
割合は、Rotterdam Scan Studyで報告された値(23.5%)23
に比べると低いものの、Framingham study(4.7%)24や
Roobの報告(6.4%)4で示された値と同様である。MBの
頻度は、コホートの特性、特に脳卒中の治療状態および
年齢分布に依存していた。したがって、本研究の統計量と
Rotterdam Scan Studyの差は、後の研究に脳卒中MBの既往
のある被験者が含まれていたこと、後者の被験者の方が年
齢が高かったこと(平均年齢はそれぞれ62.1歳、69.6歳)
に起因していると思われる。さらに、MBの検出は、欧米
諸国よりも日本における方がより一層重要であると思われる。なぜなら、一般住民を対象とした研究では、ICHは日
本国内の脳卒中症例全体の約20%を占めており25、欧米
諸国のICH発症率(10%未満)26とは異なっていたためであ
る。深部脳出血は脳卒中出血よりも、日本国内のICH
症例全体の83%を占めていることが報告されている27。

本研究にはいくつかの限界がある。第1に、本研究で
は脳卒中発症期間中の内科的治療に関する情報は得られ
なかった。特に、MBを有する患者の出血性イベントリ
クを増大させる可能性のある、抗血栓薬の潜在的重要性
を検討することはできなかった2728。第2に、主要な脳卒
中検査の方法が郵送による問診票調査に依存していたため
、血圧や血糖値のコントロール状況についてもデータを収

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>症例番号</th>
<th>年齢(歳)</th>
<th>性別</th>
<th>MB</th>
<th>SBI</th>
<th>PVH</th>
<th>SWML</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>女性</td>
<td>被検</td>
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<td>－</td>
<td>－</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>視床</td>
<td>＋</td>
<td>－</td>
<td>＋</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>被検</td>
<td>－</td>
<td>＋</td>
<td>－</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>小脳</td>
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<td>－</td>
<td>＋</td>
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<td>＋</td>
<td>－</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>＋</td>
<td>－</td>
<td>＋</td>
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<tr>
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<td>視床</td>
<td>＋</td>
<td>－</td>
<td>－</td>
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<tr>
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<td>被検</td>
<td>－</td>
<td>＋</td>
<td>－</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>被検</td>
<td>＋</td>
<td>－</td>
<td>－</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>66</td>
<td>男性</td>
<td>視床</td>
<td>－</td>
<td>＋</td>
<td>－</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ICH：脳内出血。DM：糖尿病。MB：微小出血。SBI：後頭部脳梗塞。PVH：脳室周囲軟化、SWML：皮質下白質変症。
結論

健常高齢者の場合でも、MBの存在は、その後の虚血性脳卒中およびICHの有力な危険因子となる。MBを有する高齢者の脳卒中予防には、危険因子の注意深い管理が必要である。特に、受診時にMBを有し、後に脳卒中をきたした者はいずれも高血圧が認められたため、MBを有する患者には集中的な降圧療法を実施し、将来的な虚血性脳卒中や出血性脳卒中の発現を予防すべきである。

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情報開示

なし。

References