

INTRODUCTION

Historically, there is an evidence as to the antiquity of coronary heart disease (CHD). The heart of a mummy of 50 years old lady by the name of Teye, found its way from Egypt after 3000 years, to the Department of Pathology in the University of Buffalo, NY. Report on this delayed autopsy included the following: "The coronary arteries showed well marked fibrous thickening, chiefly of the intima, with good sized patches of calcification ..., there were areas of fibrous tissue in the cardiac muscle like scars. It is probable that the woman suffered from cardiac pain that would be called angina pectoris today" (Long, 1931).

Coronary heart disease in the second half of the twentieth century, has become epidemic in most industrialized countries (WHO, 1990). Moreover, it is now emerging at an alarming rate in developing countries where rapid life style changes have occurred over recent decades (Zimmet et al., 1991).

The term Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) is synonymous with ischemic heart disease. It is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the cardiac disability, acute or chronic, arising from reduction or arrest of blood supply to the myocardium in association with disease processes in the coronary arterial system. As neither the blood supply to the myocardium, nor the coronary arteries, can be inspected in life without sophisticated investigations. So, the disease can usually be recognized through its common syndrome (Miller and Farmer, 1982).

The development of coronary heart disease is a silent process that generally lasts decades before the onset of symptoms. Of the half million heart