

Binswanger disease is caused by arteriosclerosis, thromboembolism and other diseases that obstruct blood vessels that supply the deep structures of the brain. Hypertension, smoking, hypercholesterolemia, heart disease and diabetes mellitus are risk factors for Binswanger disease. Rare hereditary diseases such as CADASIL (cerebral autosomal dominant arteriopathy with subcortical infarcts and leukoencephalopathy) also cause Binswanger disease. Thus, Binswanger disease is actually a clinical syndrome of vascular dementia with multiple causes, not a specific disease. The reduced blood flow in brain tissue appears to produce secondary inflammation that may be a target for treatment. Binswanger disease affects males and females in equal numbers and usually occurs in individuals age 50 years or older. The diagnosis of Binswanger disease is usually based on a thorough clinical evaluation, including a detailed patient history, physical examination, and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or computerized tomography (CT) scanning of the brain. MRI and CT reveal nerve fiber (white matter) degeneration and multiple small strokes in the deep structures of the brain.