



## Atrial Fibrillation Seemingly Connected to Heart Attack Risk



A new study published by JAMA Internal Medicine shows an association between atrial fibrillation (AF, an irregular heartbeat) and a nearly two-fold relative rise in the risk of myocardial infarction (MI, heart attack), especially in women and blacks.

According to the findings, MI is a recognised risk factor for AF, however the extent to which AF is in turn a risk factor for MI has not been studied.

Together with his team of colleagues, Dr. Elsayed Z. Soliman, M.D., M.Sc., M.S., of the Wake Forest School of Medicine, Winton Salem, N.C., examined the association between AF and the risk of MI in participants who were part of the Reasons for Geographic and Racial Differences in Stroke (REGARDS) study. Among almost 24,000 participants, atrial fibrillation was present in 1,631 patients.

The study highlights almost 650 MI events which occurred over nearly seven years of follow-up and shows that the relative rate of MI was nearly two times that for participants without AF. This association remained after adjustments made for total cholesterol, smoking, systolic blood pressure, blood pressure-lowering drugs, body mass index, diabetes, and use of anticoagulant and statin medications. Furthermore it was shown that the risk of MI associated with AF was higher in women and in blacks.

The authors find that the report adds to the growing concerns of the seriousness of AF as a public health burden, commenting: "In addition to being a well-known risk factor for stroke, atrial fibrillation is also associated with increased risk of MI."

According to researchers, the report's findings indicate a bidirectional relationship between MI and AF, with each leading to the other, concluding that "a bidirectional relationship between AF and MI could be partially explained by the fact that AF and MI share similar risk factors, and therefore, common pathophysiologic processes might drive both outcomes".

Source: [JAMA](#)

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