

Hormone Relaxine helps treat heart failure: study

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Relaxine, a naturally occurring hormone that helps women adapt to pregnancy, is showing promise as a treatment for acute heart failure, a new study has found.

The research, conducted by scientists from the United States and Italy and presented here Sunday at an annual conference of the American College of Cardiology, said the [hormone](#) helped patients to breathe more easily.

Given in addition to standard treatment, the hormone relaxin also reduced [hospital](#) time for patients and prevented [heart failure](#) from worsening during hospitalization, the study said.

The hormone substantially relieved shortness of breath, or dyspnea, within just a few hours, an improvement that persisted over several days, the authors pointed out.

"Over 90 percent of patients with acute heart failure have dyspnea, and for the majority of these patients, it is the dyspnea that causes them to seek medical care," John Teerlink, a professor of clinical medicine at the University of California San Francisco, who authored the study.

"Consequently, improvement of dyspnea is an important and clinically relevant target of heart failure therapy."

Relaxin causes [blood vessels](#) to dilate, taking pressure off the heart and

increasing blood flow to the kidneys.

Marco Metra, a professor of medicine at the University of Brescia, Italy, and a co-author of the report, said relaxin was "a promising new therapy for acute heart failure that requires further testing in additional, larger [clinical trials](#)."

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