

Big men more susceptible to atrial fibrillation

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Older men who were big during their 20s face an increased risk of suffering from atrial fibrillation, or abnormal heart rhythm. New research from the Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, Sweden, reveals that height and weight are both factors.

The results are being published in the latest issue of the *European Heart Journal*.

The study was initiated in 1970. Over 7,000 men living in Gothenburg aged between 45 and 55 were examined and asked questions about their lifestyle. The subjects were asked to state their weight at the age of 20. The research material has now been compared with the National Patient Register.

"[Atrial fibrillation](#) proved to be significantly more common both among those men who were big during their youth, as well as among those who gained a considerable amount of weight later on in life," says Annika Rosengren, Professor of Medicine at the Sahlgrenska Academy.

The study reveals that the risk of atrial fibrillation increases linearly with both body size and weight gain. The larger the men were in their 20s and the more weight they gained during their life, the greater the risk.

The fact that the men were big in their youth does not mean that they were obese. Obesity in young men was extremely unusual during the 1930s and 40s, and these big men were quite simply tall and well-built.

"Since both weight and height are increasing among young people, it's quite likely that atrial fibrillation will become more common when today's young men reach their 60s and 70s, particularly if the tendency to put on several kilos later on in life continues," says Annika Rosengren.

Atrial fibrillation is a disturbance in the heart's rhythm, which causes an irregular pulse and can lead to fatigue and shortness of breath. Since the heart's atria do not contract as they should, there is an increased risk of blood clots. Atrial fibrillation is the most common heart rhythm abnormality among older people. Up to five percent of all 60 and 70-year-olds in Sweden suffer from atrial fibrillation.

Source: University of Gothenburg ([news](#) : [web](#))

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