

# People with Alzheimer's disease more likely to suffer from heart disease—offered fewer treatment options than others

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Persons with Alzheimer's disease suffer from ischaemic heart diseases more frequently than others, yet they undergo related procedures and surgery less frequently than persons with no diagnosed AD, according to a nation-wide register-based study carried out at the University of Eastern Finland.

The study involved a total of 28,093 persons; that is every community-dwelling person with a diagnosed Alzheimer's disease living in Finland on 31 December 2005. According to the data obtained from the national hospital discharge register, persons with Alzheimer's disease were slightly more likely to suffer from ischaemic heart diseases than their matched [control group](#) with no existing AD diagnosis. Despite this, persons with Alzheimer's disease underwent significantly fewer procedures restoring cardiac circulation, such as coronary angioplasty and [coronary artery bypass](#) surgery, than the control group.

The results were not explained by medical treatment of cardiovascular diseases or by other related diseases such as stroke, diabetes, asthma, or cancer. Severely reduced cognitive function is a relative contraindication for coronary artery bypass surgery, but not for coronary angioplasty. However, the register-based data makes it difficult to assess whether the low number of coronary angioplasties performed on persons with Alzheimer's disease is indicative of their insufficient access to treatment.

The study constituted part of the register-based MEDALZ-2005 project, which focuses on the health of persons with Alzheimer's disease, their use of drugs and health services, and drug safety. The study was published in *International Journal of Cardiology*.

**More information:** Tolppanen, A. et al. Incident ischaemic heart disease in persons with Alzheimer's disease in a Finnish nationwide exposure-matched cohort, *International Journal of Cardiology*, 25 October 2013.

Provided by University of Eastern Finland

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