

# Study reveals heart health improving for diabetics

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Researchers from The University of Western Australia have found that the rate of heart attacks in Western Australians with diabetes has declined substantially during the past decade despite a rapid rise in the prevalence of diabetes.

Lee Nedkoff, a PhD candidate and member of the Cardiovascular Research Group in UWA's School of Population Health, was a lead author of the research paper published in the American cardiology journal *Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes*.

Ms Nedkoff said previous research had shown that people with diabetes (both type 1 and type 2) had a much higher risk of having a heart attack compared to non-diabetics. And the number of people diagnosed with diabetes had grown rapidly over the past 10 years.

"Despite this, our study shows that the rate of heart attacks among people with diabetes had decreased substantially in WA during this period," she said.

"This is important because it shows that medical management and programs aimed at improving treatment of people with diabetes have been effective in reducing heart attacks in people with diabetes.

"In particular, better management of risk factors such as [high blood pressure](#) and high cholesterol are likely to have contributed to this improvement."

But Ms Nedkoff said it was important to remember that diabetics still had double the risk of having a [heart attack](#) and more preventative work was still needed to decrease the risk.

"These findings are important for health professionals who treat diabetics, including general practitioners, cardiologists and endocrinologists, as well as State and Federal government bodies who fund and implement prevention programs. It's also important for people living with diabetes because it gives them some good news for a change."

Ms Nedkoff said the study was the first of its kind in Australia to show trends in rates of heart attacks in people with [diabetes](#) at a population level from 1998 to 2010. Her research was funded by a National Health and Medical Research Council/Heart Foundation postgraduate scholarship.

Provided by University of Western Australia

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