

Bystander CPR helps cardiac arrest survivors return to work

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Two Steps to Save a Life - Hands Only CPR - Call 9-1-1 and push hard and fast in the center of the chest. Credit: copyright American Heart Association.

More bystanders performing CPR contributed to more cardiac arrest survivors returning to work in a Danish study published in the American Heart Association journal *Circulation*.

In the largest study to date to examine return to work after cardiac arrest, researchers studied 4,354 patients in Denmark who were employed

before they suffered out-of-hospital cardiac arrests between 2001 to 2011. Researchers found:

- More than 75 percent of survivors who had a cardiac arrest outside a hospital were capable of returning to work.
- Chances of returning to work were about 40 percent higher for survivors who had received CPR from a bystander compared to those who didn't.

"We already know CPR helps save lives—and now our findings suggest there is even more benefit in performing it," said Kristian Kragholm, M.D., the study's lead author, a clinical assistant at Aalborg University Hospital and Aarhus University in Aalborg, Denmark, and a fellow at the Duke Clinical Research Institute in Durham, N.C.

Cardiac arrest is the abrupt loss of heart function in a person who may or may not have diagnosed heart disease. The time and mode of death are unexpected. It occurs instantly or shortly after symptoms appear.

Each year, more than 326,200 emergency medical services-assessed out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur in the United States. During [cardiac arrest](#), the brain doesn't receive oxygen, which can result in brain damage. "When a bystander performs CPR quickly, it helps ensure enough oxygen is getting to the brain, which can help minimize [brain damage](#) and lead to that person being able to return to work," Kragholm said.

Researchers also found:

- Survivors returning to work spent an average time of three years back at work.
- Survivors returning to work earned the same salary after arrest as before.

During the study period, Denmark implemented several CPR initiatives, including requiring anyone receiving a driver's license after 2006 to become certified in basic life support.

Since 2009, healthcare professionals have been employed in emergency dispatch call centers, guiding bystanders who give CPR.

Furthermore, the number of basic life support certificates issued nearly doubled during the study.

Provided by American Heart Association

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