

Cognitive decline may be uncommon after heart procedures

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A systematic evidence review published in *Annals of Internal Medicine* suggests that cognitive decline following regularly performed invasive heart procedures may be uncommon in older adults. However, researchers stress that evidence was limited and individual study quality was low.

Coronary and carotid revascularization, cardiac valve procedures, and catheter ablation for atrial fibrillation are commonly performed heart procedures that have been linked to an increased risk for cognitive impairment. Researchers reviewed 17 [randomized controlled trials](#) and four cohort studies to evaluate intermediate and long-term cognitive outcomes following the procedures for patients 65 years and older. Evidence was further examined to determine if the associations were modified by procedural and patient characteristics and by procedure-related stroke or [transient ischemic attack](#).

Of the few eligible studies identified, little to no difference in cognitive outcomes between or with treatment groups were found. According to the authors, these results may be somewhat reassuring to patients. Physicians should advise patients preparing to undergo one of these heart procedures that while there is some uncertainty about the estimates, current data suggest cognitive risk may be small.

More information: *Annals of Internal Medicine* [DOI: 10.7326/M14-2793](#)

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