Incident A-fib linked to shorter disability-free survival

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(HealthDay)—For older adults, incident atrial fibrillation (AF) is

associated with shorter disability-free survival, according to a study published online March 1 in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

Erin R. Wallace, Ph.D., from the Seattle Children's Research Institute, and colleagues conducted a prospective cohort study involving 4,046 individuals aged 65 years and older enrolled in fee-for-service Medicare. The authors examined the correlations between incident AF, identified according to annual study electrocardiogram, hospital diagnosis, or Medicare claims, and disability-free survival. Disability-free survival was considered survival free from disabilities associated with activities of daily living (ADL), including any difficulty or inability in bathing, dressing, eating, using the toilet, walking around the house, or getting out of a chair or bed.

During an average of 7.0 years of follow-up, the researchers found that 16.3 percent of participants developed incident AF and 77 percent became disabled or died. Compared to individuals with no history of AF, incident AF correlated with shorter disability-free survival (hazard ratio, 1.71) and increased risk of ADL disability (hazard ratio, 1.36). After adjustment for interim stroke and heart failure the correlation persisted.

"These results suggest that AF is a risk factor for shorter functional longevity in older adults, independent of other risk factors and comorbid conditions," the authors write.

More information: Abstract
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