

Elderly heart attack survivors rarely filled prescription smoking cessation medications

November 14 2016

Elderly smokers who were discharged from the hospital after having a heart attack rarely filled prescriptions for medications that might help them quit smoking, despite being counseled about the need to quit during their hospital stay, according to a preliminary study presented at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2016.

Researchers studied nearly 2,400 [heart attack](#) survivors, who were older than 65 and current or recent smokers, at 377 U.S. hospitals.

They found:

- While 96 percent received [smoking cessation](#) counseling before discharge, only 9.8 percent filled a prescription for the [smoking cessation medications](#) bupropion or varenicline within 90 days after discharge.
- Only 13 percent filled a prescription for these medications within one year after being hospitalized for heart attack.
- Whites and women were more likely to use [smoking cessation drugs](#) within 90 days after hospitalization for a heart attack.

Being older and having had a previous procedure to increase blood flow to the heart were factors that made it less likely that patients would use bupropion or varenicline within 90 days after being discharged from the hospital for a heart attack.

There remains a great deal of room for improvement in intensifying

smoking cessation interventions during and after a patient's hospital stay for a heart attack, researchers said.

Provided by American Heart Association

Citation: Elderly heart attack survivors rarely filled prescription smoking cessation medications (2016, November 14) retrieved 3 May 2024 from

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