

# More women than men lose interest in sex after treatment for imminent heart attack

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Women are more likely to lose interest in sex than men, while men are more dissatisfied after treatment for a (imminent) heart attack. Emotional distress plays an important role, negatively impacting all aspects of sexual functioning.

That's the main conclusion from research by Tilburg University into what happens to [patients'](#) sexual satisfaction, confidence in their sexual relationship, and interest in sex during the first year after being treated for an acute or imminent [heart attack](#). The study also showed that patients who are treated electively report poorer sexual functioning compared to acute patients.

Nina Kupper, of the Center of Research on Psychology in Somatic diseases (CoRPS), and colleagues analyzed data on 510 patients with [coronary artery disease](#) in the Netherlands. The patients were on average 66 years old, and 20% were women. A third of the patients received elective treatment by PCI (percutaneous coronary invention).

Directly after PCI, 1 in 3 women (31%), and in comparison, nearly 1 in 8 men (13%) reported a substantial loss of interest in sex. After one year, still 1 in 4 women (24%) and 1 in 7 men (14.5%) reported such a loss of interest. Interest in sex was substantially reduced when patients experienced anxiety and/or depressive symptoms. Importantly, patients receiving an elective treatment tended to show a decline in interest, while acute patients' interest seemed to improve over the year post-PCI.

With respect to satisfaction with sexual functioning, 1 in 4 men (23%) as compared to 1 in 7 women (15%) were (very) dissatisfied with their sexual functioning at the time of the treatment. One year later, these percentages had remained stable. Patients experiencing [emotional distress](#), patients who also have diabetes, and patients receiving elective treatment felt more dissatisfied with their sexual functioning one year after PCI.

Although men and women were equally confident in their sexual relationship remaining as it was before right after treatment, a year later, men had become less optimistic, while [women's](#) confidence actually grew. Patients with low confidence in their [sexual relationship](#) were again characterized by emotional distress and having diabetes.

Clinically, these results should raise awareness to discuss [sexual functioning](#) with all patients in intervention cardiology outpatient clinics on a regular basis, taking gender differences into account.

Provided by Tilburg University

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