

# Good communication helps improve outcomes for heart patients

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Patients with hardened arteries who reported good communication with their healthcare providers were less likely to use the emergency room and more likely to comply with their treatment plans, according to a new study presented at the American Heart Association's Quality of Care and Outcomes Research Scientific Sessions 2017.

Researcher interviews of 6,810 adults with atherosclerosis, found:

- Patients who said they communicated effectively with their providers were 52 percent more likely to report the use of prescribed cholesterol-lowering statin drugs and 26 percent more likely to report taking aspirin.
- Patients with good provider communication were 41 percent less likely to go to the emergency room.
- In comparison, those who reported poor communication with their healthcare providers were twice as likely to report poorer outcomes and spent \$1,243 more in healthcare costs.

Participants were asked questions such as "How often did your healthcare providers show respect for what you had to say?" and "How often did healthcare providers spend enough time with you?"

"A patient's beliefs about their illness, their perception of the [health](#) care system, the extent to which a physician fulfils the patient's requests and other obstacles can make it a challenge for patients and providers to connect," said lead study author Victor M. Okunrintemi, M.D., M.P.H.,

a researcher at Baptist Health South Florida in Miami.

He said "One cannot say for sure how communication exactly influences health outcomes. However, optimal communication between patients and their [healthcare providers](#) may yield better understanding of the medical condition, build trust and confidence, motivate patients and promote adherence to medication which could improve [patients'](#) health status while reducing the need for unnecessary health resource utilization which can lower [health care expenditures](#)."

Provided by American Heart Association

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