

Standard medical tests miss nearly two-thirds of heart attack diagnoses

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Standard medical tests miss nearly two-thirds of heart attack diagnoses, reveals research presented today at CMR 2018.

- 'Unrecognised' and 'recognised' heart attacks have the same long-term risk of death.
- Undiagnosed patients do not receive as many medications to reduce the risk of death and other adverse outcomes as patients with known heart attacks.

Unrecognised heart attacks ([myocardial infarction](#); MI) refer to sub-clinical events that are missed in routine medical care but are picked up by electrocardiogram (ECG) or by cardiovascular magnetic resonance (CMR) imaging, which is more accurate.

"Unrecognised MI has a poor short-term prognosis but until now the long-term outlook was unknown," said lead author Dr Tushar Acharya, a cardiologist at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, US. "This study investigated long-term outcomes."

The study included 935 community dwelling participants of ICELAND MI, a substudy of the AGES-Reykjavik epidemiology study. At the start of the study, participants underwent an ECG and CMR and were categorised into one of three groups: unrecognised MI (sub-clinical events, missed on routine medical care, but picked up by CMR), recognised MI (clinical events, also picked up by CMR), and no MI

(verified by CMR).

The average age of participants was 76 years and 52% were females. At the start of the study, 91 participants (10%) had recognised MI, 156 (17%) had unrecognised MI, and 688 (74%) had no MI.

"That means 63% (156 out of 247) of the myocardial infarctions identified by CMR were missed in routine medical care," said Dr Acharya. "Unrecognised MI may be more common than recognised MI."

At ten years, mortality rates were similar in patients with unrecognised and recognised MI (49% and 51%, respectively) and significantly higher than in those with no MI (30%) (p

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