

Cardiovascular disease may increase risk of rapid functional decline in older adult

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In a *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* study of adults aged 65 and older who were functionally independent, individuals with cardiovascular disease (CVD) were more likely to experience rapid

functional decline than those without.

For the 392 individuals with CVD in the study, three distinct trajectories of function emerged over a four-year follow-up period: stable function (32.0 percent), gradual functional decline (44.2 percent), and rapid functional decline (23.8 percent). Similar trajectories were seen for those without CVD, with a smaller proportion in the rapid functional decline group (16.2 percent). Those who were women, older, and had less education and greater comorbidity were especially likely to experience rapid functional decline.

"The [risk factors](#) identified in this study may be used by clinicians to identify [older adults](#) with CVD who would benefit from functional screening and intervention to deter further decline," said lead author Dr. Tamra Keeney, of the MGH Institute of Health Professions. "Future work should investigate additional factors that are associated with rapid functional decline in late life as well as interventions that can lead to functional improvement in this high-risk group."

More information: *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.15584](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.15584)

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