

# Nearly two-thirds of people at high risk of heart disease and stroke have excess belly fat

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Nearly two-thirds of people at high risk of heart disease and stroke have excess belly fat, according to results of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) EUROASPIRE V survey presented today at the World Congress of Cardiology & Cardiovascular Health in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.<sup>1</sup>

Excess fat around the middle of the body (central obesity) is a marker of abnormal fat distribution. This belly fat is bad for the heart, even in people who are not otherwise overweight or obese.

Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death in Europe. Each year in Europe there are more than 11 million new cases of cardiovascular [disease](#) and 3.9 million deaths caused by cardiovascular disease.<sup>2</sup> Elimination of risk behaviours would prevent at least 80% of cardiovascular diseases.<sup>3</sup>

The study also found that less than half (47%) of those on antihypertensive medication reached the [blood pressure target](#) of less than 140/90 mmHg (less than 140/85 mmHg in patients with self-reported diabetes). Among those taking lipid-lowering drugs, only 43% attained the LDL cholesterol target of less than 2.5 mmol/L. In addition, many participants not taking any antihypertensive and/or lipid-lowering therapy had elevated blood pressure and elevated LDL cholesterol. Among patients being treated for type 2 diabetes, 65% achieved the blood sugar target of glycated haemoglobin (HbA1c) less than

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