

Gynecological exam, heart screening should go hand-in-hand

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(HealthDay)—What if you were given a heart screening when you see

your gynecologist?

New research suggests that such a strategy might be smart medicine.

Scientists found that 86% of women seen at an outpatient gynecology clinic had a [cardiovascular risk factor](#) and 40% had at least one cardiovascular symptom, but there was low awareness of cardiovascular [risk factors](#) and symptoms among the women.

The level of awareness of risk factors such as [high blood pressure](#), high cholesterol and obesity was somewhat higher among those with a history of adverse pregnancy outcomes, but those without such a history were more likely to have risk factors and cardiovascular symptoms such as angina and shortness of breath.

The study was published recently in the *Journal of Women's Health*.

For many women, a visit to the gynecologist is their only form of primary health care, so improving heart screening in ob-gyn clinics may improve detection of heart problems in women, researcher Dr. Roxana Mehran, from Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City, said in a journal news release.

The international team of researchers also concluded that a simple questionnaire works well in gynecology clinics for assessing women's heart disease risk.

"This compelling paper emphasizes how far we are from achieving optimal cognizance of [[heart disease](#)] risk factors in addition to identifying symptoms of angina among all women, particularly perimenopausal [women](#) and those with a history of adverse pregnancy outcomes," Dr. Gina Lundberg, from Emory Women's Heart Center in Atlanta, wrote in an accompanying editorial.

More information: The Heart and Stroke Foundation has more on [women and heart disease](#).

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