

Irregular, long menstrual cycles up risk for cardiovascular disease

October 26 2022



Irregular and long menstrual cycles are associated with increased rates of

cardiovascular disease (CVD), according to a study published online Oct. 25 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Yi-Xin Wang, M.D., Ph.D., from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, and colleagues explored associations between menstrual cycle characteristics across the reproductive life span and the risk for CVD. The analysis included 80,630 participants in the Nurses' Health Study II with 24 years of follow-up.

The researchers found that compared with women reporting very regular cycles at the same ages, women who had irregular cycles or no periods at ages 14 to 17, 18 to 22, or 29 to 46 years had a higher risk for CVD (hazard ratios [95 percent confidence intervals], 1.15 [0.99 to 1.34], 1.36 [1.06 to 1.75], and 1.40 [1.14 to 1.71], respectively). Women reporting a cycle length ≥ 40 days or a cycle too irregular to estimate from ages 18 to 22 or 29 to 46 years also had higher CVD risk (hazard ratios [95 percent confidence intervals], 1.44 [1.13 to 1.84] and 1.30 [1.09 to 1.57], respectively) compared with women reporting a cycle length of 26 to 31 days. Subsequent development of hypercholesterolemia, chronic hypertension, and type 2 diabetes only explained 5.4 to 13.5 percent of the observed associations.

"These results suggest that menstrual cycle characteristics throughout the reproductive lifespan may be used as additional markers of CVD risk in women," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to the [pharmaceutical industry](#).

More information: Yi-Xin Wang et al, Menstrual Cycle Regularity and Length Across the Reproductive Lifespan and Risk of Cardiovascular Disease, *JAMA Network Open* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.38513](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.38513)

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Citation: Irregular, long menstrual cycles up risk for cardiovascular disease (2022, October 26)
retrieved 26 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-10-irregular-menstrual-cardiovascular-disease.html>

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