After cardiac arrest, women more likely to suffer anxiety, depression than men

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Women who survive cardiac arrest are more likely to suffer anxiety or depression than male survivors, a new study warns.
Data regarding the five-year health consequences of a cardiac arrest revealed "most significantly a 50% rise in antidepressant prescription in the first year among women that was not mirrored in men," said researcher Robin Smits, a doctoral student at Amsterdam University Medical Center. After five years, this rise tapered off to a roughly 20% increase in prescriptions.

"While we need to carry out more research to understand exactly why this happens, we can already say that it shows that particularly women are not adequately supported after a cardiac arrest," Smits said in a medical center news release.

For the study, researchers analyzed data on 1,250 people (average age: 53) who survived an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in the Netherlands.

They also found that people who survive a cardiac arrest are more likely to face financial problems afterward.

"We saw significant decreases in employment rates and, consequently, earnings," Smits said. "Further, we also saw a change in 'primary earner status'—meaning that the member of a household who had the highest earnings frequently changed after a cardiac arrest, suggesting that it was difficult for individuals to return to the labor market."

The new research was published July 8 in the journal Circulation Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes.

An earlier study involving the same group found that women live longer than men after cardiac arrest.

"By combining these two findings, we see that the consequences of cardiac arrest differ depending on your sex," Smits said. "While women may be more likely to survive and live longer, they are also more likely
to be affected [by] mental health issues after a cardiac arrest."

**More information:** Robin L.A. Smits et al, Long-Term Socioeconomic and Mental Health Changes After Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest in Women and Men, *Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes* (2024). [DOI: 10.1161/CIRCOUTCOMES.124.011072](https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCOUTCOMES.124.011072)

The American Heart Association has more on the mental health effects of a cardiac crisis.

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