

# Researchers find bone density scans can also help identify cardiovascular disease

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Researchers from Hebrew SeniorLife's Institute for Aging Research, University of Western Australia, University of Sydney, and Edith Cowan University have discovered that bone density scans, typically used to determine fracture risk, could also be an aid in identifying cardiovascular disease. The study was recently published in the *Journal of Bone and Mineral Research*.

Researchers analyzed the bone density scans of over 1000 older women from Australia for the presence of [calcium deposits](#) in the large artery in the abdomen called the aorta. They graded the severity of these calcium deposits using scans done for osteoporosis screening. They then followed the women for almost 15 years to determine the occurrence of cardiovascular disease within the cohort.

"We found that that the presence of calcifications increased the likelihood of having cardiovascular disease such as heart attacks, and even the likelihood of cardiovascular deaths and mortality in general." Said Co-author Douglas P. Kiel, M.D., M.P.H., Director, Musculoskeletal Research Center at Hebrew SeniorLife's Institute for Aging Research. "Our study highlights the fact that having a bone density test not only tells women about their risk of fracture, but also their long term risk for [cardiovascular disease](#). This makes bone density testing even more useful in screening."

**More information:** Joshua R. Lewis et al, Long-term atherosclerotic vascular disease risk and prognosis in elderly women with abdominal aortic calcification on lateral spine images captured during bone density testing: A prospective study, *Journal of Bone and Mineral Research* (2018).

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Provided by Hebrew SeniorLife Institute for Aging Research

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