

Some heart patients ride roller coasters and other thrill-seeking activities despite warnings

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Adults with an inherited thickening of the heart muscle, often don't stop participating in thrill-seeking activities despite recommendations that they should. And while some experienced minor consequences, only a few suffered serious health effects as a result, according to preliminary research from an online survey to be presented in Chicago at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2018.

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, characterized by enlarged [heart](#) walls, is one of the most common cause of sudden cardiac death in young people. Doctors often recommend that people with the condition don't participate in activities like [roller coaster](#) riding, jet skiing and more because stimulation to the heart might be too dangerous.

A Yale study examined the safety of thrill-seeking activities among adults diagnosed with [hypertrophic cardiomyopathy](#). Researchers examined anonymous online survey responses

from 633 adults (average age 51) who were at high-risk for irregular heartbeats (arrhythmias). Some had implantable defibrillators and 24.4 percent reported daily symptoms.

Respondents were asked about their participation in roller coaster riding, jet skiing, rafting, bungee jumping, rappelling, paragliding, kayaking/canoeing, motor racing, snowboarding, BASE jumping (including parachuting or wingsuit flying from a cliff) and skydiving, as well as symptoms that occurred because of the thrill-seeking activities.

Researchers found:

- 331 respondents said they continued to engage in thrill-seeking activities after being diagnosed with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy.
- Responders engaged in nearly 8,000 total thrill-seeking activities. Nearly 190 people, or about a third, experienced minor symptoms, such as nausea, dizziness, chest pain or palpitations.
- Nine people reported significant events during or within 60 minutes of participating in a thrill-seeking event, such as passing out or requiring therapy to shock the heart. In four of those cases, the events occurred during roller coaster riding.

"Caregiver advice on activity restrictions is important for hypertrophic [cardiomyopathy](#) patients, especially younger ones, who wish to enjoy a lifestyle as close to their peers as safely possible," said Nikolaos Papoutsidakis M.D., Ph.D., study author and associate research scientist at Yale University School of Medicine in New Haven, Connecticut. "These results may aid discussions between physicians and patients regarding the

safety of participation in thrill-seeking activities."

Provided by American Heart Association

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