

Women are more likely than men to die in hospital from severe heart attack

Men and women have about the same in-hospital death rate for heart attack - but women are twice as likely to die if hospitalized for a more severe type of heart attack, according to a report in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*.

Among patients with ST elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) in a recent study, the death rate was 10.2 for women compared to 5.5 for men. Researchers said the women were older and had higher overall baseline risk profiles than men. However, the study also found that some recommended treatments are delayed and underused in women.

Researchers analyzed data from the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines (GWTG) program to determine if recent efforts to improve heart attack care at hospitals had closed the gender disparity gap. They reviewed the clinical characteristics, treatments and outcomes of more than 78,000 patients diagnosed with myocardial infarction admitted to 420 hospitals between 2001 and 2006.

A decade ago, women had an overall higher death rate after heart attack compared with men. This suggests that these hospitals are now using high rates of evidence-based therapies shown to increase survival after heart attack. In the study, researchers found that, compared to men, women were: 14 percent less likely to receive early aspirin; 10 percent less likely to receive beta blockers; 25 percent less likely to receive reperfusion therapy (to restore blood flow); 22 percent less likely to receive reperfusion therapy within 30 minutes of hospital arrival; and 13 percent less likely to receive angioplasty within 90 minutes of hospital arrival. For more information, visit www.americanheart.org/getwiththeguidelines .