

Heart Attack Incidence Still High Among Women and Blacks Despite Overall Decrease

Specifically, ST-segment-elevation myocardial infarctions—the most dangerous kind of heart attacks—declined by nearly 50% from 2004 to 2020.

May 14, 2024 By Laura Schmidt

The incidence of the most dangerous forms of heart attack decreased by nearly 50% in 15 years but remains high in some underrepresented groups, according to research presented at the [Society for Cardiovascular Angiography & Interventions \(SCAI\) 2024 Scientific Sessions](#).

A ST-segment-elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) is caused by a near total blockage of a coronary artery. This type of [heart attack](#) can severely damage muscles in the [heart](#), weakening its ability to pump enough blood, which can result in death.

While there was an overall decrease in STEMI incidence, underrepresented and low-income patients still experience higher mortality rates, according to a [SCAI news release](#).

“Advancing science in focus areas that bring to light [disparities](#) that exist is important to understand where we, as health care innovators, need to do more,” SCAI president George Dangas, MD, PhD, said in the release. “As the leading organization representing interventional cardiologists, it is up to us to start the conversation on these injustices, so we can address them and provide equitable care for all.”

The study utilized nationwide inpatient data from more than 3.4 million heart attack patients from 2004 to 2020. During that period, the overall incidence of STEMI steadily decreased from 98.7 per 100,000 inpatient hospitalizations per population in 2004 to 49 in 2020. Most heart attacks occurred in older adults.

When observing health by income, on average, STEMI incidence was about 20% lower in higher-

income populations compared with lower-income ones. What's more, people with lower incomes had higher mortality rates.

Access to early diagnosis and treatment of STEMI is important for survival, but a retrospective analysis presented at the SCAI event found that women, Black and Latino patients were up to 25% less likely to receive certain treatments for heart attacks compared with men and white patients.

"We encourage clinicians to focus on providing equitable access to high-quality care through increased education and implementing targeted interventions for vulnerable populations," said lead study author Fares Ghanem, MD, a [cardiovascular disease](#) physician at Southern Illinois University. "Our goal is for our data to be used to help create better, more tailored care plans for patients across the country."

To read more, click [#Heart Attack](#). There, you'll find headlines such as "[Anger May Raise Heart Attack Risk](#)," "[Smoking Cannabis Associated With Increased Risk of Heart Attack, Stroke](#)" and "[Women May Realize Health Benefits of Regular Exercise More Than Men](#)."

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