

Study finds Irish people slow to go to hospital with heart attack symptoms

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(Medical Xpress)—Patient behaviour is one of the biggest causes of delay in getting to hospital when suffering a heart attack according to the findings of a new HRB-funded study at Trinity College Dublin. The delay is a result of people not associating their symptoms with a heart attack, contacting their GP first, taking medication and being slow to use emergency services.

"People who are at risk of [heart attack](#) need to know more about what to do when they suffer heart attack symptoms", explains Gabrielle McKee, Director of Research at the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin who led the study. "We clearly need to reinforce the fact that it's not always about a sudden pain in the chest and left arm. Instead some people can experience symptoms that are gradual and intermittent, rather than sudden and continuous. If in doubt, it is essential that people act fast and call 999. The Emergency services will advise if an [ambulance](#) is needed".

"Our study, involving 1894 Irish patients, indicates that people tend to consult GPs or take more medications and are reluctant to use an ambulance. This can cause a delay in getting treatment and will have a major bearing on the type of treatment available and consequently [patient outcomes](#). Our findings provide further evidence for the recent Irish Heart Foundation campaign advocating for prompt, appropriate response to heart attack symptoms."

"There have been improvements in recent times in terms of speeding up

ambulance travel and treatment once you present at hospital with a heart attack. Now we need to ensure that people know when to contact the [emergency services](#) so that they get the appropriate treatments as soon as possible."

Commenting on the findings, Enda Connolly, Chief Executive at the Health Research Board says;

"The Health Research Board is committed to funding research that improves people's health and transforms approaches to [patient care](#). This study provides strong evidence and simple, practical advice for improving patient outcomes. For the research to have impact, it is essential that this message is communicated clearly so people can respond quickly and appropriately to heart attack symptoms".

The findings of this study are just published online in the *International Journal of Cardiology*.

Provided by Trinity College Dublin

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