

# Death of partner associated with increased risk of heart attack, stroke

February 24 2014

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The risk of heart attack or stroke is increased in the 30 days after a partner's death.

Bereavement is recognized as a risk factor for death and is associated with [cardiovascular events](#).

The authors compared the rate of myocardial infarction (MI, [heart attack](#)) or stroke in older patients (n=30,447, 60 to 89 years of age) whose partner died to that of individuals (n=83,588) whose partners were still alive during the same period.

Fifty patients (0.16 percent) experienced MI or stroke within 30 days of their partner's death compared with 67 (0.08 percent) of controls. The increased risk of MI or stroke in bereaved men and women lessened after 30 days.

"We have described a marked increase in [cardiovascular risk](#) in the month after spousal bereavement, which seems likely to be the result of adverse physiological responses associated with acute grief. A better understanding of psychosocial factors associated with acute cardiovascular events may provide opportunities for prevention and improved clinical care."

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