

# Significant decline in heart attack patients who sought care at peak of pandemic

28 April 2021



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Results from a retrospective observational study, presented today at Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions (SCAI) 2021 Virtual Scientific Sessions, reveal a 70% decline in the number of patients presenting with acute myocardial infarction (AMI) during April 2020 compared to April 2019. While the number of patients with AMI seeking care at hospitals dropped during the pandemic, those that did receive care experienced more severe symptoms because of delays in patients seeking emergency services.

AMI, commonly recognized as a heart attack, is responsible for more than one million deaths in the U.S. every year. For the best patient outcomes, seeking care within the first 90 minutes of heart attack symptoms is critical and delaying care can lead to complications or increased mortality. This study also comes at a time when [heart disease](#) remains the number one cause of death for Americans.

The single-center retrospective observational study was conducted at NYU Langone Health in New

York City. Researchers compared patients with AMI who underwent [invasive coronary angiography](#) in April 2020 versus April 2019. The study was intended to compare characteristics and outcomes of patients with AMI during the peak of the pandemic.

Findings show there was a significant reduction in AMI cases referred for invasive angiography in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Of patients with AMI, a larger proportion (39%), had ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI) than in April 2019 (20%). There was a trend toward delayed times between symptom onset and hospitalization in 2020. Investigators noted no differences in demographics, comorbidities or baseline medications before or after the pandemic. Multi-vessel coronary disease was less common, but peak troponin concentrations were higher in 2020 than in the previous year.

"We were surprised to observe a significant reduction in the number of patients referred for coronary management of MI; this suggests that many patients may have stayed at home despite their symptoms of a [heart attack](#)," said Nina Talmor, MD, lead investigator and internal medicine resident, NYU Langone Health. "Our findings point to the need for improved [public health](#) messaging for future health crises, so that people do not remain at home out of fear, rather than seeking necessary and potentially lifesaving care. We hope our study will bring awareness to the need for timely cardiac care both in and out of a pandemic."

Study authors look to re-address public health messaging to direct patients to appropriately seek the best care for their condition for future [health](#) emergencies.

Provided by Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions

APA citation: Significant decline in heart attack patients who sought care at peak of pandemic (2021, April 28) retrieved 28 May 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-04-significant-decline-heart-patients-sought.html>

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