

# Dementia incidence higher than CHD in very elderly

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(HealthDay)—For adults aged 80 years or older, the incidence of

dementia is greater than that of coronary heart disease (CHD), according to a study published in the March 8 issue of the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.

Lewis H. Kuller, M.D., Dr.P.H., from the University of Pittsburgh, and colleagues examined the correlation between coronary and other peripheral atherosclerosis and risk of death, [dementia](#), and CHD in the very elderly. The correlations were assessed in 532 participants of the Cardiovascular Health Study-Cognition Study from 1998 to 1999 (mean age, 80 years) and 2012 to 2013 (mean age, 93 years).

The researchers found that 36 percent of participants had [coronary artery calcium](#) (CAC) scores >400, with lower scores for women and African-Americans. There were direct correlations for CAC score and the number of coronary calcifications with age-adjusted total mortality and CHD. There was a higher age-specific incidence seen for dementia versus CHD; about 25 and 16 percent of deaths were caused by CHD and dementia, respectively. Of those who died, about 64 percent had a prior diagnosis of dementia. The incidence of dementia was significantly decreased for white women with low CAC scores.

"A very important unanswered question, especially in the very elderly, is whether prevention of atherosclerosis and its complications is associated with less Alzheimer disease pathology and dementia," the authors write.

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