

# Cardiac disease linked to higher risk of mental impairment

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Cardiac disease is associated with increased risk of mild cognitive impairment such as problems with language, thinking and judgment—particularly among women with heart disease, a Mayo Clinic study shows. Known as nonamnestic because it doesn't include memory loss, this type of mild cognitive impairment may be a precursor to vascular and other non-Alzheimer's dementias, according to the findings published online Monday in *JAMA Neurology*.

[Mild cognitive impairment](#) is an important stage for early detection and intervention in dementia, says lead author, Rosebud Roberts, M.B., Ch.B., a health sciences researcher at Mayo Clinic.

"Prevention and management of cardiac disease and [vascular risk factors](#) are likely to reduce the risk," Roberts says.

Researchers evaluated 2,719 people ages 70 to 89 at the beginning of the study and every 15 months after. Of the 1,450 without mild cognitive impairment at the beginning, 669 had heart disease and 59 (8.8 percent) developed nonamnestic mild cognitive impairment; in comparison 34 (4.4 percent) of 781 who did not have heart disease developed nonamnestic mild cognitive impairment.

The association varied by sex; [cardiac disease](#) and mild cognitive impairment appeared together more often among women than in men.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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