

A deeper understanding of AFib could lower risk

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More than 2.5 million Americans are living with Atrial Fibrillation (AFib). AFib is an irregular heartbeat that can lead to blood clots, stroke, heart failure and other heart-related complications.

What doctors and researchers currently understand about treating AFib stems mainly from whether a patient has been diagnosed with the condition or not. University of Minnesota researchers are urging the medical community to take a closer look, specifically at AFib burden.

AFib burden refers to the amount of AFib that an individual has. The goal of the scientific statement published in the American Heart Association's journal *Circulation* is to increase knowledge and awareness by healthcare professionals of effective, state-of-the-art science related to the causes, prevention, detection, management, and future research needs related to AFib burden.

"We hope to bring awareness to this concept of measuring the AFib burden and then to outline what we know about it," said Lin Yee Chen, MD, MS, tenured associate professor, Department of Medicine at the University of Minnesota Medical School, "the hope then is to use that knowledge so more research can be done to fill in those gaps."

AFib is associated with an elevated risk of stroke, and this statement also pushes for more research to refine risk classifications for stroke. Further understanding the relationship between AFib pattern or burden and stroke risk might result in deeper insights into [stroke prevention](#).

"We could see an enormous benefit to our patient population once these standards are applied. And now is the time to do so," said Chen.

More information: Lin Y. Chen et al, Atrial Fibrillation Burden: Moving Beyond Atrial Fibrillation as a Binary Entity: A Scientific Statement From the American Heart Association, *Circulation* (2018).
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