

New study finds short- and long-term depressive symptoms associated with cardiovascular disease

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Short- and long-term depressive symptoms can predict the occurrence of cardiovascular events, according to a new study by University of Maine researchers. In addition, short-term or baseline depressive symptoms increase risk for cardiovascular events for up to 15 years, and chronic depressive symptoms for up to 10 years.

The study by the UMaine research team—Emily Haigh, Olivia Bogucki, Peter Dearborn, Michael Robbins and Merrill Elias—published in the *Journal of Health Psychology* (published online ahead of print June 26, 2018) explored the prospective relationship between baseline and chronic [depressive symptoms](#), and the development of cardiovascular [disease](#) over a 15-year period.

Depression has been identified as a risk factor for cardiovascular disease and much of the research conducted to date has focused on depressive symptoms assessed at a single time point over a short follow-up period. However, this approach fails

to capture the chronic nature of depression and the long-term effects of depression on cardiovascular health, according to the UMaine researchers.

Haigh and colleagues found that both baseline and chronic depressive symptoms predict the occurrence of [cardiovascular events](#), including chest pain, heart attack, heart disease, heart failure, mini stroke and acute stroke.

Chronic depressive symptoms were found to be a risk factor for cardiovascular events up to 10 years later. The finding that baseline depressive symptoms increase risk for cardiovascular events up to 15 years later contradicts a recent meta-analysis that failed to find a relationship between depressive symptoms and future cardiovascular events when a long follow-up period (i.e., 15 years or longer) was employed.

The results of this study suggest that both transient and chronic depressive symptoms are an independent risk factor for cardiovascular events. Cardiovascular disease is one of the most common medical conditions and the leading cause of death worldwide. One potential way to reduce the occurrence of cardiovascular disease is by focusing on the identification and treatment of depressive symptoms.

Provided by University of Maine

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