



Hospital Cardiovascular Cases in Barbados

Briefing created by the Barbados National Chronic Disease Registry, The University of the West Indies.

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• For all our surveillance outputs • <https://uwi-bnr.github.io/bnr-refit/5RefitDownloads/> •

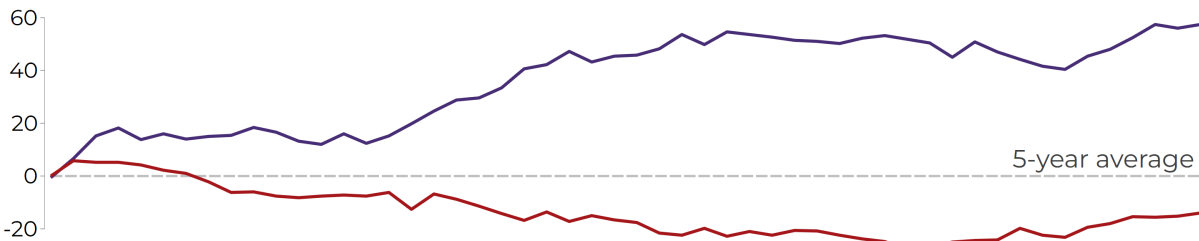
Why This Matters

Counts are the simplest and most transparent way to show what is happening in our hospital. Each number represents a person who suffered a heart attack or stroke, and together they show the pressure on our health system. Before we can interpret trends or calculate rates, we must first be confident in these raw numbers—how many people were affected, and when. Presenting counts provides the foundation for our remaining surveillance results.

What We Did

We reviewed all hospital-registered strokes and heart attacks for 2023 and compared them with the previous five years. We examined who was affected—men and women under 70 and those 70 and older—and tracked how cases built up week by week. By comparing 2023 counts with the five-year average, we could see when numbers rose above or fell below what would normally be expected.

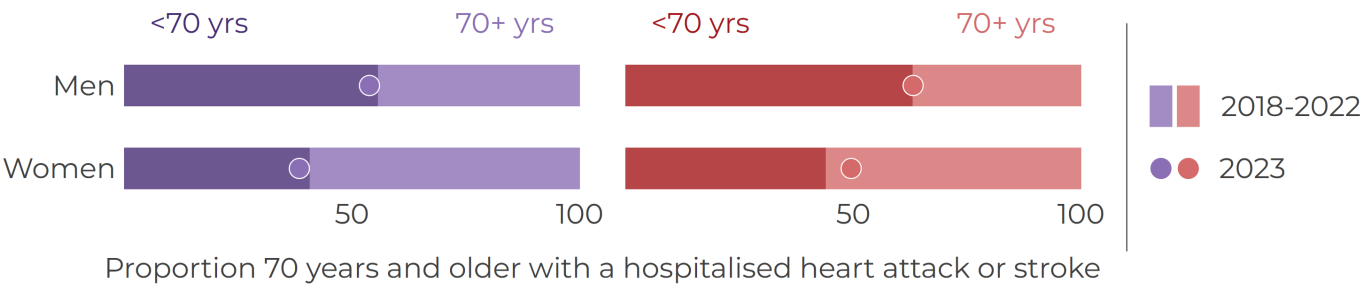
More Strokes in 2023, Less Heart Attacks



Cumulative CVD cases in 2023 compared to 5-year average (2018-2022)

In 2023, the Barbados National Registry recorded 312 strokes in women and 312 in men, and 105 heart attacks in women compared with 141 in men. Strokes stayed consistently above the five-year average, ending the year about 60 cases higher than expected, while heart attacks remained below average for much of the year. The contrast may reflect how quickly each emergency is recognised and treated—stroke patients often reach hospital sooner through family or bystander action, whereas people with heart attack symptoms may delay seeking care. These differences, along with lingering post-COVID changes in health-seeking behaviour, suggest that hospital activity as much as disease burden may have shifted, underscoring the value of simple counts as an early warning for changes in care and system readiness.

Strokes and Heart Attacks by Age



Across both sexes, a large share of cardiovascular events continue to occur before age 70 — highlighting the ongoing burden of premature disease. Among men, over half of all strokes (54–56%) and nearly two-thirds of heart attacks (63%) affected those under 70. Women fared slightly better, but still saw around 40% of strokes and nearly half of heart attacks in this younger age group. The persistence of such high proportions of early events shows that much of Barbados' cardiovascular disease remains preventable.