**Migraines Tied to Increased Risk of Heart Problems**

*By*

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Women who suffer from migraines are at higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease than women who aren’t plagued by the severe headaches, and they are more likely to have a stroke, heart attack or to die of heart disease, a new study reports.

The report, [published in BMJ](http://www.bmj.com/content/353/bmj.i2610), is an analysis from the Nurses Health Study II, a Harvard study that tracked 115,541 women aged 25 to 42, from 1989 through June 2011. At the study’s start, 15 percent said they had migraines.

Over the course of two decades, 1,329 heart attacks, strokes or other heart events occurred, and 223 women died of heart disease. The researchers adjusted for smoking and other risk factors and found that the migraine sufferers had a 50 percent greater risk of major cardiovascular disease over all.

Women who had migraines were 39 percent more likely to have a heart attack, 62 percent more likely to have a stroke and 73 percent more likely to have other heart problems or to require a procedure like angioplasty. Migraines were also associated with a 37 percent greater risk of dying of heart disease.

The study is not the first one to find an association between migraines and cardiovascular disease. But experts say they are hard-pressed to explain the link and can only advise migraine sufferers to be aware of the risk and pay attention to signs of a possible heart attack or stroke.