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**Pessimism might be hard on your heart**

By Linda Searing November 17, 2016

**The question**

Pessimistic people tend to think the worst will happen. “If something can go wrong for me, it will,” they believe. Might this attitude have an effect on the heart?

**This study**

The researchers analyzed data on 2,267 adults, 52 years and older, who were questioned at the start of the study to determine where they rated on an optimism/pessimism scale. During the next 11 years, 121 people died of coronary artery disease, the type of heart disease involving narrowed or blocked arteries that can cause a heart attack.

Overall, those who died were more pessimistic than the others. People who had scored the highest on the pessimism scale were more than twice as likely to have died of heart disease as were those who were the least pessimistic.

**Who may be affected**

Adults who are pessimistic. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, lack of exercise and smoking have long been considered key contributors to heart disease and heart attacks.

More recently, stress and depression have been shown to put people at risk for heart problems, too, and researchers are investigating whether various personality traits and mental health and emotional issues affect the heart as well. Coronary artery disease remains the No. 1 cause of death in the United States.

**Caveats**

Much of the data used in the analysis came from the participants’ responses on questionnaires.

**Find this study**

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