

PRESS STATEMENT

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**New *JACC* study calls attention to higher heart attack rates and worse outcomes among younger women, particularly younger African-American women**

*Greater emphasis needs to be placed on prevention, diagnosis and treatment of women's heart disease*

July 28, 2014 (Washington, DC) – WomenHeart: The National Coalition of Women with Heart Disease commented on the new study [‘Trends in Acute Myocardial Infarction in Young Patients and Differences by Sex and Race, 2001 to 2010’](#) published in the July 29, 2014 issue of the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.

This groundbreaking study shows that younger women -- especially younger African-American women -- who are hospitalized with a heart attack fare worse than younger men hospitalized with heart attack. This points to an urgent need to invest in federal programs and research to improve the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of heart disease in younger women, particularly in younger African-American women.

The study sample consisted of 230,684 hospitalizations with principal discharge diagnosis of acute myocardial infarction (heart attack) among patients 30 to 54 years of age in the U.S. Approximately one quarter of study participants (25.9%) were women, and among the women participants, 19.7% were African-American.

The study shows an increasing trend in heart attack hospitalization rates among younger women, while heart attack hospitalizations among younger men are decreasing. The study further reveals that younger women hospitalized with a heart attack have:

- More comorbidities than younger men hospitalized with a heart attack, including congestive heart failure, hypertension, renal failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and diabetes mellitus.
- Longer hospital stays than younger men.
- Higher in-hospital mortality compared with younger men.

“The new [study](#) shows how important it is for women, especially younger women, to become aware of their risk factors for heart disease, such as hypertension and diabetes, so they can take the appropriate actions to control their risk factors,” said Lisa M. Tate, Chief Executive Officer, WomenHeart. “Younger women need to take preventive measures to protect their heart health and improve their prognosis in the event of a heart attack,” she continued.

New *JACC* study calls attention to higher heart attack rates and worse outcomes among younger women, particularly African-American women - more

The study also reveals that younger African-American women fare even worse than women of other races when it comes to their heart health:

- Younger African-American women have much higher rates of hospitalization from heart attack than younger Caucasian women. In comparison, African-American and Caucasian men have comparable hospitalization rates.
- Younger African-American women hospitalized with a heart attack have the highest prevalence of comorbidities, including hypertension, diabetes, and heart failure.

“In order to reduce gender and racial disparities in heart disease prevention, diagnosis and treatment, the medical community and the federal health agencies need to mobilize resources to raise awareness about heart disease risk factors among women and minorities and protect these at-risk populations from the heart disease epidemic,” said Tate.

The new [study](#) also underscores the importance of giving women heart patients accurate diagnostic testing and appropriate treatment in a timely manner, as well as the need to conduct more sex-specific and race-specific research into the biological, clinical and social factors responsible for heart disease in women.

“We urge Congress to invest in programs and research to increase understanding of how heart disease affects women, and to provide women with the crucial information that they need to take the necessary steps to protect their heart health,” concluded Tate.

**WomenHeart Chief Executive Officer Lisa M. Tate is available for media interviews on:**

- Prevention of heart disease in women
- National trends in women’s heart health
- The need for increased awareness of heart disease in women
- Gender and racial differences in cardiovascular care

**WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease** is the nation's only patient centered organization serving the 42 million American women living with or at risk for heart disease – the leading cause of death in women. WomenHeart is solely devoted to advancing women's heart health through advocacy, community education, and the nation's only patient support network for women living with heart disease. WomenHeart is both a coalition and a community of thousands of members nationwide, including women heart patients and their families, physicians, and health advocates, all committed to helping women live longer, healthier lives. To receive a free on line heart health action kit or to donate, visit [www.womenheart.org](http://www.womenheart.org).

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