

COVID-19 and the Heart



According to the [latest figures from the World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), there are a total of 168,019 confirmed cases of coronavirus worldwide. So far, the virus has caused 6610 deaths and has affected 148 countries. The highest number of cases are in China (81,077), followed by Italy (24,747), Iran (14,991), Republic of Korea (8236), Spain (7753), France (5380), Germany (4838) and Switzerland (2200). Other countries have also been affected, but so far, the number of cases remains under 2000 in most regions (as of March 16th, 2020).

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As the number of cases of coronavirus continues to increase globally, an important question being asked is its cardiovascular effects and the impact on patients with cardiovascular disease.

According to frontline healthcare workers, the war against coronavirus came unexpectedly, and healthcare systems in countries most infected face a breakdown. If the number of cases doesn't slow down soon, the need for more beds, more ICUs, more supplies, and more equipment will multiply.

But are patients infected with coronavirus also facing cardiovascular complications? Things still remain unclear, but according to a [single-centre report on 99 patients in China](#), 40% had cardiovascular or cerebrovascular disease, and 12% had diabetes. Another report [published in JAMA](#), also conducted with patients in China, reported at least one comorbid condition, with hypertension (31%), diabetes (10%), and CVD (14.5) being the most common among the 138 patients that were studied. The Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 10.5% of coronavirus fatalities occurred in patients with cardiovascular disease, and 6% fatalities occurred in patients with hypertension.

There is always a risk that viral infections could have an impact on the heart. There is significant evidence to show the prevalence of cardiac complications among patients suffering from seasonal flu. There is still no solid evidence to show the specific impact of coronavirus on the heart. However, clinicians are being advised to take caution with patients who suffer from cardiovascular disease. There is no vaccine for COVID-19 so far, and that is why there is a need to be vigilant and to ensure that high-risk patients are monitored to avoid cardiovascular complications.

Source: [The Lancet](#), [JAMA](#), [WHO](#)

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