Concerns: Insomnia Heart Risk

People with HIV who suffer from insomnia are more likely to have a heart attack.

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Insomnia is associated with a higher risk of a specific type of heart attack among people living with HIV. Previous research has shown that HIV-positive people are more likely to experience sleep disturbances than the general public, which may contribute to their higher burden of cardiovascular disease. Researchers studied 11,189 people with HIV, of whom 57% reported difficulty falling or staying asleep and 48% reported that their insomnia symptoms were bothersome. During four years of follow-up, 141 people (1%) experienced a type 1 myocardial infarction (MI), resulting from plaque buildup in arteries, and 100 (1%) had a type 2 MI, driven by a decreased supply of oxygen. While 47% of people with type 1 MIs reported insomnia—similar to the 48% rate among people without heart attacks—this rose to 59% among those who had type 2 MIs. After adjusting for age, sex and race, the researchers found no link between insomnia and type 1 heart attacks, but insomnia was associated with a 67% greater risk of type 2 MIs.

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