

Death Rates From Heart Failure Higher in Poorer Areas

Tackling social issues, such as unequal access to health, may help reduce mortality among those in underserved communities.

October 1, 2020 By [Alicia Green](#)

Almost 5.7 million people in the United States experience heart failure. But new findings published in the *Journal of Cardiac Failure* suggest that those who live in poverty and in more socially deprived areas are more likely to die of this condition than those who don't, reports [Medical News Today](#).

For the inquiry, researchers at University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center examined just over 1 million deaths from heart failure across 3,048 counties between 1999 and 2018. Scientists measured social determinants by using indexes that accounted for employment, poverty, education, income and housing.

Findings showed that the average death rate from heart failure per county was 25.5 deaths per 100,000 people. However, mortality was much higher in counties where individuals experienced elevated rates of socioeconomic deprivation. (This association was consistent despite race, ethnicity, sex and an area's degree of urbanization.)

Researchers also noted that survival rate inequalities remained constant during this time span and theorized that a range of factors, such as access to health, substandard care and poor health literacy, might be responsible.

"Regardless of the contributing factors, the association between communities with high socioeconomic deprivation and [heart failure] mortality is strong and suggests that targeting social deprivation may be impactful in reducing [heart failure] mortality," scientists advised.

"Additionally, the yield of intensive [heart failure] preventive strategies may be higher in areas with high social deprivation."

In addition, Sadeer G. Al-Kindi, MD, a cardiologist at University Hospitals' Harrington Heart and Vascular Institute and a study coauthor, observed that living in a particular county shouldn't render an individual more likely to die of heart failure.

Researchers said they would use the study findings to devise thoughtful solutions to address the

disparities in health care affecting impoverished populations.

For related coverage, read "[Is Race an Issue When People With Heart Failure Are Hospitalized?](#)"

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