

**According to the results of a study recently published in the Revista Española de Cardiología (REC)**

## **Individuals with only primary education are at greater risk of suffering from an acute myocardial infarction**

- **A study conducted by researchers from IMIM in Barcelona and from the Josep Trueta University Hospital and Jordi Gol Foundation in Girona analysed the relationship between socioeconomic status and the risk of suffering from an acute myocardial infarction.**
- **Education level and social class based on occupation are indicators that are associated with the risk of having an acute myocardial infarction. The population group with a primary education or lower have a greater risk of suffering from this pathology.**
- **This increased risk is independent of the presence of classic cardiovascular risk factors and indicates the existence of social determinants of health that explain the increased risk.**

**Madrid, 30 September 2010** - A study published by the latest edition of the Revista Española de Cardiología (REC - Spanish Cardiology Journal) and conducted by the Cardiovascular Epidemiology and Genetics Group from IMIM (Hospital del Mar Research Group) of Barcelona, the Cardiology Department of the Josep Trueta Hospital in Girona and the Primary Health Care group in Girona from the Jordi Gol Foundation has analysed the relationship that exists between socioeconomic status and the risk of suffering from an acute myocardial infarction. According to this study, individuals in lower social classes (based on education level and occupation) are more prone to suffer from this type of infarction than those of a higher socioeconomic status, irrespective of their risk factors.

The study included 1,369 patients who have suffered from a myocardial infarction and 1,369 healthy people of the same age, with the same proportion of men and women as the patients and representative of the general population. The participants were classified into three categories, based on their occupation: executives, university graduates and technicians; office workers, self-employed workers and supervisors of skilled workers; and manual workers. They were also classified according to their education level: individuals with a university education or higher; secondary education; and primary education or lower.

After analysing the patients, taking into account these characteristics, and irrespective of their cardiovascular risk factors (such as hypercholesterolemia, obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, smoking habit, etc), the researchers discovered that education level and social status based on occupation are indicators that provide complementary information to the doctor when determining the risk that a patient has of suffering from an acute myocardial infarction.

According to Dr. Roberto Elosua of the Cardiovascular Epidemiology and Genetics Group from IMIM, one of the authors of the study and member of the Spanish Society of Cardiology (SEC), *“the fact that there is a greater risk of suffering from an acute myocardial infarction in lower socioeconomic classes indicates that there are social factors that also contribute to determining the risk of having a disease such as myocardial infarction. These social factors include economic level inequalities, social marginalisation, employment insecurity, a lack of social support and a lack of opportunities to obtain education. These factors could explain that, for example, social classes with a greater economic and social level are the ones that acquire healthier life habits more quickly and have access to healthier food, which is also generally more expensive”.*

In this regard, Dr. Elosua points out that for this reason *“the latest European guidelines set forth that these social factors must be taken into account when planning global cardiovascular disease prevention programmes”.*

### **Spanish Society of Cardiology (SEC)**

The Spanish Society of Cardiology (SEC - *Sociedad Española de Cardiología*) is a non-profit, scientific and professional organisation dedicated to increasing awareness regarding the heart and circulatory system, making progress in the prevention and treatment of related diseases and improving the survival and quality of life of cardiac patients.

The SEC's main objectives include contributing to international research, especially in Europe and Latin America, creating national and international ties in order to carry out actions, and representing all professionals interested in cardiology.

More information is available at: [www.secardiologia.es](http://www.secardiologia.es)

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