

Does social networking to support cardiac rehabilitation, benefit people with heart disease?

Clinical Question	How safe and effective are social network and social support interventions to support cardiac rehabilitation and secondary prevention in the management of people with heart disease?
Bottom Line	Despite the relatively large volume of included studies, this reviews analysis indicates that the impact of social network or social support interventions for people with heart disease, as compared with usual care, remains uncertain. The review found weak evidence to suggest that social network or social support interventions may improve health-related quality of life (HRQoL) and reduce systolic and diastolic blood pressure. There may be a reduction in all-cause and cardiovascular related mortality at > 12 months follow-up, but the certainty of evidence was low. There was a lack of evidence relating to mortality (all-cause or cardiovascular related at ≤ 12 months), morbidity (hospital admissions, rates of myocardial infarction (MI) or revascularisation), and adverse events.
Caveat	A notable limitation to the review emerged from the inconsistency in reporting of interventions trialled. The interventions reviewed were extremely diverse, and their component parts were not always clearly described; nor were measures of fidelity to intervention design always included.
Context	Globally, cardiovascular diseases (CVD, that is, coronary heart (CHD) and circulatory diseases combined) contribute to 31% of all deaths, more than any other cause. In line with guidance in the UK and globally, cardiac rehabilitation programmes are widely offered to people with heart disease, and include psychosocial, educational, health behaviour change, and risk management components. Social support and social network interventions have potential to improve outcomes of these programmes, but whether and how these interventions work is poorly understood.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Purcell C, Dibben G, Hilton Boon M, Matthews L, Palmer VJ, Thomson M, Smillie S, Simpson SA, Taylor RS. Social network interventions to support cardiac rehabilitation and secondary prevention in the management of people with heart disease. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2023, Issue 6. Art. No.: CD013820. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD013820.pub2. This review contains 54 trials with a total of 11,445 participants.
Pearls No. 728, July 2023, written by Assoc Professor Vanessa MB Jordan.	

Systematic review link:

<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD013820.pub2/full>