

## Are psychological therapies helpful for people with coronary heart disease, heart failure or atrial fibrillation?

---

<b>Clinical Question</b>	Are psychological therapies effective and safe in adults who have a diagnosis of coronary heart disease (CHD), heart failure (HF) or atrial fibrillation (AF)?
<b>Bottom Line</b>	<p>This review indicates that all types of psychological interventions, when pooled together and when compared to no psychological intervention, probably result in a moderate reduction in depression and anxiety in adults with CHD or HF and may result in a moderate improvement in HRQoL mental component summary scores. Meta-regression analyses showed that psychological interventions specifically targeting anxiety are probably more effective than non-targeted interventions, though further research studies are needed to substantiate this finding.</p> <p>Intervention acceptability was generally good and there was no indication of adverse events, all-cause hospitalisation, cardiovascular morbidity (non-fatal MI) or cardiovascular mortality being related to the psychological intervention.</p>
<b>Caveat</b>	The overall completeness and applicability of the evidence is limited, due to insufficient investigation or reporting of primary and secondary outcomes. For example, costs and cardiovascular hospitalisations were only reported in a single study. As such, evidence of treatment effects on these outcomes warrants careful interpretation. There were no studies looking at adults with AF.
<b>Context</b>	Depression and anxiety occur frequently (with reported prevalence rates of around 40%) in individuals with CHD, HF or AF and are associated with a poor prognosis, such as decreased health-related quality of life (HRQoL), and increased morbidity and mortality. Psychological interventions commonly include cognitive behavioural therapies and mindfulness-based stress reduction. They have been shown to reduce depression and anxiety in the general population, though the exact mechanism of action is not well understood. Further, their effects on psychological and clinical outcomes in patients with CHD, HF or AF are unclear.
<b>Cochrane Systematic Review</b>	Ski CF, Taylor RS, McGuigan K, Long L, Lambert JD, Richards SH, Thompson DR. Psychological interventions for depression and anxiety in patients with coronary heart disease, heart failure or atrial fibrillation. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2024, Issue 4. Art. No.: CD013508. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD013508.pub3. This review contains 21 trials with a total of 2591 participants.

---

---

**Pearls No. 744, April 2024, written by Assoc Professor Vanessa MB Jordan.**

---

Systematic review link:

<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD013508.pub3/full>