

Study Says 80% of COVID Patients Suffer Heart Damage

A new study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Cardiology has found that nearly 80 percent of COVID patients sustained heart damage.

The research was conducted by Germany's University Hospital Frankfurt. Researchers examined the MRI scans of 100 patients who were diagnosed with COVID-19. Most of the patients were said to be otherwise healthy and in their 40s and 50s.

More than three out of four of the patients showed heart muscle damage with an MRI test.

In some patients, the heart may be "in serious trouble as a part of COVID-19 disease," Dr. Valentina Puntmann of University Hospital Frankfurt told Reuters. Among 100 patients ages 45 to 53, "a considerable majority" – 78 – had inflammation in the heart muscle and lining. Sixty-seven had recovered at home while 33 had required hospitalization. Half of the former patients were more than two months out since their diagnosis at the time of the MRI. Thirty-six patients reported ongoing shortness of breath and general exhaustion, and 71 had blood markers of heart muscle damage. Compared with similar people who had not had COVID-19, the recently recovered patients' hearts pumped more weakly and displayed other risk factors for heart failure. Puntmann suspects the abnormalities are signs of permanent problems. "While we do not have direct evidence for late consequences yet, such as the development of heart failure ... it is quite possible that in a few years, this burden will be enormous based on what we have learned from other viral conditions that similarly affect the heart," she said. (JAMA & JAMA)

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