

Doctor

PEARLS



Practical Evidence About Real Life Situations

Psychological interventions may be effective for non-cardiac chest pain

Clinical question

How effective are psychological interventions for symptomatic management of non-specific chest pain in patients with normal coronary anatomy?

Bottom line

Psychological treatments, especially cognitive behavioural therapy and hypnotherapy, may be effective in terms of reduced chest pain frequency in the short term (up to 3 months) for the treatment of non-specific chest pain. The evidence for brief interventions was less clear. No adverse effects of psychotherapy were found.

Caveat

The benefits of treatment were not sustained beyond 3 months. There was no effect on the severity of the chest pain. The evidence was limited to small trials of questionable quality.

Context

Recurrent chest pain in the absence of coronary artery disease is a common, difficult-to-treat problem that can lead to excess use of medical care. A substantial number of patients are not reassured by negative medical assessment, reporting persistent pain and limitations. Psychological factors appear to be of importance for treatment.

Cochrane Systematic Review

Kisely SR et al. Psychological interventions for symptomatic management of non-specific chest pain in patients with normal coronary artery anatomy. *Cochrane Reviews*, 2012, Issue 6. Article No. CD004101 DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD004101.pub4. *This review contains 15 studies involving 803 participants.*

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