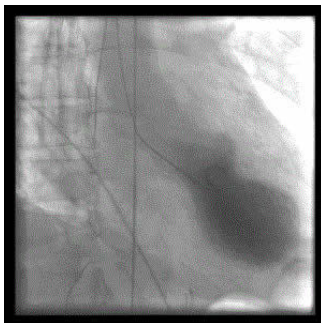

Broken Heart Syndrome



It is often believed that a sad or stressful event can trigger the broken heart syndrome. Also called the Takotsubo syndrome or stress cardiomyopathy, such even event can cause the heart muscles to become very weak quite rapidly. It can result in severe chest pain and can often lead to a heart attack and in some cases, even death.

However, a new study published in the *European Heart Journal* reveals that only terrible times don't cause the syndrome. Joyful and happy occasions can also trigger it. In other words, it is not necessary that only a broken heart will kill you. A joyful one can do the same thing. During the study, researchers evaluated data from the International Takotsubo Registry at the University Hospital Zurich in Switzerland. They looked at data from 485 patients from nine countries who had suffered from the syndrome due to an emotional trigger. Findings showed that while 96 percent had the broken heart syndrome due to a sad or stressful event, 4 percent of the study participants' syndrome was triggered by joyful occasions such as a wedding, a birth of a grandchild, birthday party and a sports game. Though small in number, these were what the researchers categorised as "happy heart" cases.

While happy moments triggering the broken heart syndrome is useful to know, the fact still remains that the vast majority of cases were triggered by sadness or stress. Stress (long-term stress especially), has a direct link to cardiovascular health. The researchers of this study however contend that their findings broaden the clinical spectrum of the syndrome and that clinicians should be aware that happy moments can also sometimes trigger such an event.

"We have shown that the triggers for TTS can be more varied than previously thought," study author Jelena Ghadri, a cardiologist at the University Hospital Zurich, said. "A TTS patient is no longer the classic 'broken hearted' patient, and the disease can be preceded by positive emotions too."

Author Christian Templin, a cardiologist at the University Hospital Zurich explains that TTS is characterised by an intertwined feedback mechanism that involves the psychological and/or physical stimuli, the brain and the cardiovascular system. Both happy and sad life events share the final common pathways in our central nervous system thus explaining why a joyful event could trigger the heart syndrome.

Source: [European Heart Journal](#)

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