



## High Coronary Artery Calcium Scores Pose an Extremely Elevated Risk for Hard Coronary Events

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This article from the Tulane University School of Medicine examines the clinical outcome of 98 patients with coronary calcium scores over 1,000.

The patients were followed for an average of 17 months. At the time of their scan, all patients were asymptomatic. During the follow up period, 35 patients (36%) experienced a hard coronary event, defined as either a heart attack or death. None of the patients had a stress test or cardiac catheterization after their scan.

The annualized event rate for the subjects was therefore 25%. The authors compared these results to follow-up studies of patients with severe perfusion abnormalities on functional stress imaging. Generally, such patients showed an annual event rate of 7%, significantly less than the high calcium score patients. The authors surmise that the very high event rate is due to a very high coronary plaque burden.

Extensive diffuse atherosclerosis of the coronary arteries as measured by coronary calcium appears to be more predictive than extensive existing ischemia for an adverse outcome over the ensuing 2-3 year period.

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