

New survey uncovers lack of awareness around heart valve disease and risk factors among women

Despite prevalence of chronic conditions associated with aortic stenosis in women over 65, the majority have never been referred to a cardiologist; Racial disparities may present further opportunities for awareness amongst women at risk for cardiovascular disease

DUBLIN, April 7, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- Medtronic plc, a global leader in healthcare technology, today unveiled topline findings of its comprehensive survey on women's perceptions and knowledge of risk factors, treatment patterns, and preventive care practices related to heart valve disease. The survey is endorsed by [Women as One](#) and was conducted by Wakefield Research sampling 1,000 women in the United States (U.S.) aged 50 and older.

"In order to tackle the ever-growing challenges that female patients face in health care, we need to fully understand issues surrounding their awareness and the impact it has on their health," said Nina Goodheart, senior vice president and president, Structural Heart & Aortic, which is part of the Cardiovascular Portfolio at Medtronic. "Heart valve disease awareness deserves broader attention in the U.S., especially considering many women aged 50 and older are at an increased risk of developing the disease. This survey shines a light on the need for increased awareness, early detection, and access to appropriate care for women."

The survey targeted a diverse sample of women aged 50 and above, with 53% between 50 to 65 years old and 47% aged 66 or older. Notably, 23.5% of respondents were Black or Hispanic, ensuring a nationally representative demographic of U.S. women in this age group. Findings from the survey highlight:

There is a lack of awareness among women about the risks of aortic stenosis (AS) and cardiovascular disease.

Despite the prevalence of cardiovascular disease amongst women, awareness is low, with 26% of women not having heard of any of the most common heart-related conditions such as coronary artery disease, congenital heart disease, heart valve disease, or AS, and only 30% of women aged 50 and older having heard of AS.

Additionally, women of color have less awareness compared to their white counterparts with only 10% of Black women and 21% of Hispanic women having heard of AS, compared to 33% of white women.

Women are not referred for diagnosis and treatment.

Even in women who present with risk factors, they are not always referred or screened- highlighting the opportunity to strengthen the referral and preventive screening pathway. In fact, 82% of women above age 65 are living with a chronic condition that increases their risk of aortic stenosis, yet the majority (68%) have never been referred to a cardiologist or taken a heart disease risk assessment.

Women do not seek cardiovascular care because they believe their symptoms will not be taken seriously.

Women experiencing heart valve disease symptoms such as fatigue and shortness of breath stated the following would prevent them from seeking medical care:

- More than 2 in five women cite fear or anxiety about going to the doctor
- 15% cite feeling like their doctor will dismiss their symptoms

Women are interested in treatments that have been proven effective in women.

For women diagnosed with a medical condition such as heart valve disease and deciding which treatment to pursue, they look to what would work best for them based on several important factors, such as minimally invasive treatment, recovery time, and

doctor recommendation.

- When selecting the top three factors they consider, close to half (45%) include a minimally invasive procedure - highlighting the importance of solutions like TAVR.
- Additionally, the majority (75%) of women surveyed are very or extremely likely to ask their doctor about a different treatment option if they learn of one that is shown to be more effective in women than the one their doctor recommended.

"When compared to male patients, female patients often present with more advanced symptoms of heart valve disease highlighting the importance of uncovering how we can best educate women on early warning signs and treatment options sooner," stated Roxana Mehran, MD, co-founder and president of Women as One. "These survey findings grant us the opportunity to develop better partnerships with communities experiencing the most inequities and provide a pathway to refining policies and systems that will lead to better care."

Medtronic, Women as One, and others are spearheading a range of initiatives, from [educational campaigns](#) and women-focused clinical trial research with policymakers and government officials to increase health equity for women with heart valve disease.

"Driving change to address inequities in healthcare cannot be done alone. When it comes to heart valve disease in women, Medtronic is proud to partner with our clinical community and organizations like Women as One to identify opportunities to improve health equity outcomes," added Goodheart. "Today at the American College of Cardiology Scientific Session, we look forward to further demonstrating this commitment with the results of our SMART trial, our latest effort to address the underrepresentation of women in cardiovascular health research."

About Women and Aortic Stenosis

Aortic stenosis (AS), a narrowing of the aortic valve, is among the most common of all valvular heart diseases, impacting 1.5 million in the U.S.¹ Symptomatic severe aortic stenosis (ssAS) can be fatal if left untreated and the average patient survival is two years without treatment.² Despite women's longer life expectancy, once impacted by ssAS, women suffer from higher mortality than men, even after matching for age.³ Alarming, 77% of women are living with chronic conditions that increase their risk of aortic stenosis, including high blood pressure (53%), high cholesterol (39%), and obesity (38%). Learn more at [MyInteractiveASJourney.com](#).

About Women as One

Women as One is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, founded in 2019 by internationally recognized cardiovascular clinical trialists, Dr. Roxana Mehran and Dr. Marie-Claude Morice. The mission of the organization is to promote talent in medicine by providing unique professional opportunities to women cardiologists, knowing that diversity of thought and experience improves scientific discovery and patient outcomes. The organization provides programs and services ranging from clinical education and mentorship to clinical trial services. Through resources dedicated exclusively to women cardiologists and the patients they serve, Women as One effectively speeds up the rate at which gender disparities in cardiology are adequately addressed.

About Medtronic

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first, and better outcomes for our world. In everything we do, we are engineering the extraordinary. For more information on Medtronic (NYSE: MDT), visit www.Medtronic.com, and follow Medtronic on [LinkedIn](#).

Any forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties such as those described in Medtronic's periodic reports on file with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Actual results may differ materially from anticipated results.

¹ Carabello BA, Paulus WJ. Aortic stenosis. *Lancet*. March 14, 2009;373(9667):956-966.

² Lester SJ, Heilbron B, Gin K, Dodek A, Jue J. The natural history and rate of progression of aortic stenosis. *Chest* April 1998;113(4):1109-1114.

³ Am Heart Assoc. 2021;10:e018816. DOI: 10.1161/JAHA.120.018816.

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