

Topics on the research agenda

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Earlier recognition of cardiovascular disease

A stroke, heart attack or cardiac arrest can occur suddenly, without warning. Research helps us to recognise the warning signs of cardiovascular disease earlier, making it easier to intervene before it's too late. For example, improving imaging techniques, like MRI and CT scans. Or by measuring signalling substances (biomarkers) in the blood. Research can also assist us to arrive at the correct diagnosis for people whose symptoms do not directly suggest a cardiovascular disease.

Related technical terms:

early diagnosis, atypical symptoms, biomarkers, imaging, non-invasive monitoring, diversity, screening of high-risk groups, population screening.

Cardiovascular disease in women

Many diagnosis and treatment methods are based on research in men. This poses the question whether they apply equally to women. Cardiovascular disease often manifests differently in women than in men. The risks of developing cardiovascular disease are also different in women. Research provides guidelines for the earlier recognition of signals and the better adjustment of diagnosis and treatment for women.

Related technical terms:

women-specific risk factors and symptoms, gender differences, atypical symptoms, diversity.

Better treatment of heart failure and arrhythmias

Retaining your health while growing old is a dream that many people share. The chances of this improve if cardiovascular disease is detected and treated at an early stage. That is important for atrial fibrillation, an arrhythmia that can lead to a stroke if not treated with medication. And doctors must be able to identify and treat a special form of heart failure (diastolic heart failure).

Research helps us to detect these types of conditions at an early stage in elderly people and to develop better treatments, which means more people will grow old without these conditions.

Related technical terms:

integrated care, atrial fibrillation, individual risk-analysis and anticoagulant, (diastolic) heart failure, remodelling, healthy aging.

Acute treatment of strokes

If the flow of blood to the brain is restored in the first few hours after a stroke, the patient has a good chance of recovering with little permanent damage. But this is not the case for all patients suffering a stroke. And just as many patients die from a haemorrhagic stroke now as they did 40 years ago. Research can lead to the development of better treatments to save more brain tissue in the first few hours after a stroke.

Related technical terms:

CVA, new treatment strategies, acute treatment, (intra-arterial) thrombolysis.

New ways to keep up a healthy lifestyle

Many people find it difficult to eat a healthy diet and get sufficient exercise, to keep their risk of cardiovascular disease down. This applies equally to young people - for whom the risk of cardiovascular disease seems far off - and to patients having difficulty keeping to a healthy lifestyle on their own after intensive rehabilitation. Research helps us to find new ways to support people in living a healthy life for a long time. For example, are check-ups and advice from computer programmes effective?

Related technical terms:

prevention, innovative prevention strategies, modern technology and aids (eg social media, serious gaming), risk reduction, promoting health, self-management, personalised care.