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**Poor Prognosis Among Community Dwellers with Mild Hyponatremia**

*In middle-aged or older adults, mild hyponatremia predicted death and MI.*

In hospitalized patients, hyponatremia is associated with elevated risk for adverse clinical outcomes. However, little is known about the prognostic value of mild hyponatremia in the general population. Danish researchers examined serum sodium levels in 671 middle-aged or older community dwellers (mean age, 65) who did not have known heart disease, stroke, cancer, or other life-threatening illnesses.

Serum sodium levels ranged between 129 and 152 mEq/L for all participants. During a median follow-up of 6.3 years, the primary endpoint — death or myocardial infarction — occurred in 103 participants (15.3%). The incidence of the primary endpoint was associated strongly with hyponatremia: The endpoint occurred in 6 of 14 people (43%) with Na  $\leq$ 134 mEq/L, in 17 of 62 people (27%) with Na  $\leq$ 137 mEq/L, and in 86 of 609 people (14%) with normal serum sodium levels (Na >137 mEq/L). The difference in risk among the groups persisted after controlling for multiple risk factors (including diuretic use) and in subgroup analyses among patients who did not use diuretics and among patients with sodium levels near the lower limit of normal (135–137 mEq/L). Higher all-cause mortality (but not excess MIs) accounted for the risk conferred by hyponatremia.

**Comment:** In this study of apparently healthy community-dwelling older adults, mild hyponatremia predicted a higher risk for death. If the results can be replicated, additional research would be warranted to determine the mechanisms responsible for this observation and to determine whether interventions that raise the serum sodium level might also prolong life in these patients.

— [Jamaluddin Mooloo, MD, MPH](#)

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Sajadieh A et al. Mild hyponatremia carries a poor prognosis in community subjects. *Am J Med* 2009 Jul; 122:679.