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Risk factor: socioeconomic status

"Wealth is both an enemy and a friend.”
~ Nepalic proverb

In developing countries, coronary heart disease has historically been more common in the more educated and higher socioeconomic groups, but this is beginning to change. In industrial countries, such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States, there is a widening social class difference in the opposite direction.

Studies in developed countries suggest that low income is associated with a higher incidence of coronary heart disease, and with higher mortality after a heart attack. The prevalence of risk factors for heart disease, such as high blood pressure, smoking, and diabetes, is also higher. The use of medications is lower, especially of lipid-lowering agents and ACE inhibitors, as well as other treatments, such as cardiac catheterization.

The pathways by which socioeconomic status might affect cardiovascular disease include: lifestyle and behaviour patterns; ease of access to health care; and chronic stress.