The exact relationship between cardiovascular disease (CVD) and depression is not clear, but even mild forms of depression or depressive symptoms increase the risk of heart disease in women by two to three times. Atypical depression symptoms and the many physical symptoms that accompany heart disease—along with the fact that cardiovascular health care providers typically have a low awareness of mental health issues—make depression difficult to diagnose in CVD patients.

Whang, W., et. al. (March 17, 2010). Depression and risk of sudden cardiac death and coronary heart disease in women: Results from the Nurses’ Health Study. Journal of the American College of Cardiology.
WOMEN, DEPRESSION & HEART DISEASE

Depression is twice as common in women than in men.

Women who are depressed are more than 2x as likely as women who are not depressed to experience sudden cardiac death.

Women suffering from depression are at risk of heart disease 2 – 3 times more than woman who are not depressed.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD), often used interchangeably with heart disease, generally refers to conditions that involve narrowed or blocked blood vessels that can lead to a heart attack, chest pain or stroke. Other heart conditions, such as those that affect the heart’s muscle, valves or rhythm, also are considered forms of heart disease.

Some signs and symptoms of depression include:
- Little interest or pleasure in doing things;
- Trouble falling or staying asleep/sleeping too much;
- Feeling down, depressed or hopeless;
- Feeling tired or having little energy;
- Poor appetite or overeating;
- Feeling bad about yourself;
- Trouble concentrating; and
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or that you would be better off dead.

CVD health care providers typically have a low awareness of mental health issues and may not accurately diagnose or treat depression in the majority of CVD patients.

Talk with your doctor if you experience more than two of the above symptoms.

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