

Better education, better arteries
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It's known, for example, that a person's education level is linked to their risk of a heart attack. The better educated you are, the lower your chances. But that could be for all sorts of reasons: if you already have heart disease, you might take your medications more religiously, your doctor might take you more seriously, you could have better access to health care and so on.

One way of getting to the heart of the education question, so to speak, is to see how it relates to artery disease that hasn't yet become a problem.

3000 people aged 25 on average were followed for 15 years using the amount of calcium around their coronary arteries on CAT scan as a measure of subclinical disease. And yes, the better educated participants had less calcium and therefore probably less disease.

Part of the effect was risk factors like smoking, cholesterol and blood pressure but there was still an influence of education alone. One theory is that education gives you more control of your life or a better job, reducing chronic stress.