

MEN'S HEALTH



Low Testosterone and Heart Disease Mortality: A Marker, Not a Verdict

689 men with established heart disease.
Most had low testosterone. They died faster.
But that is not the same as testosterone
being the reason.

Swipe

THE OLD ASSUMPTION

A low number looks like a verdict

It is tempting to read a low testosterone result in a heart patient as the explanation for his risk. The data will not let that stand.

THE NUMBER

70.68% had low testosterone

Among 689 men with established cardiovascular disease in the NHANES survey, more than seven in ten had a total testosterone at or below 300 ng/dL.

THE FINDING

48% higher risk of death

Low testosterone carried a 48 percent higher adjusted risk of dying from any cause, hazard ratio 1.48, confidence interval 1.08 to 2.02. 202 of the men died over 55 months of follow-up.

READ IT CORRECTLY

1.48 times is not a fixed number

The confidence interval means the true difference could be as small as 8 percent or as large as roughly double. It is not a probability for any one man.

IN WOMEN

The link disappeared after adjustment

Before adjustment, low testosterone in women looked significant. After accounting for other factors, it vanished entirely.

WHAT ABOUT TREATMENT?

Non-inferior is not the same as life-extending

The largest randomized trial on this question tested testosterone therapy in men with hypogonadism and found it non-inferior to placebo. That is a safety reassurance, not proof that treatment extends life.

THE BOTTOM LINE



A reason to look harder, not to prescribe

In a man with established heart disease, a low testosterone result should trigger a closer look, a repeat morning sample, SHBG, LH and FSH, and a search for reversible causes, not an automatic prescription.