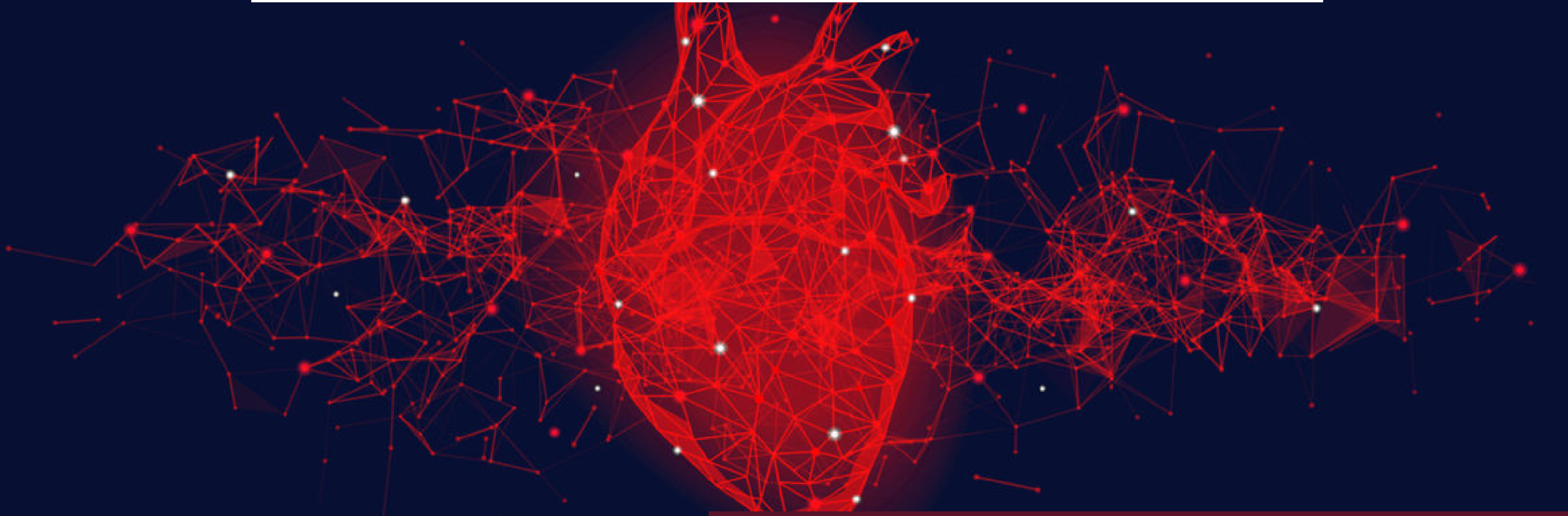


# THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF CHRONIC STRESSORS ON RISKS OF MYOCARDIAL INFARCTION IN US OLDER ADULTS

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## CHRONIC STRESS

Operating through prolonged and repeated activation of physiological systems that contribute to cumulative “wear and tear” (e.g., allostatic load) across multiple biological regulatory systems (e.g., cardiovascular, endocrine, immune), which leave the body vulnerable to disease

## OBJECTIVE

Investigate the association between cumulative exposure to chronic stressors and the incidence of myocardial infarction (MI) in US older adults

**Myocardial Infarction:**  
Medical term for Heart Attack

**Study Population:** Nationally representative data from the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) were used for analysis.

**Measurement:** Ongoing chronic stressors were ascertained based on responses to the Psycho- social and Lifestyle Questionnaire administered in the HRS

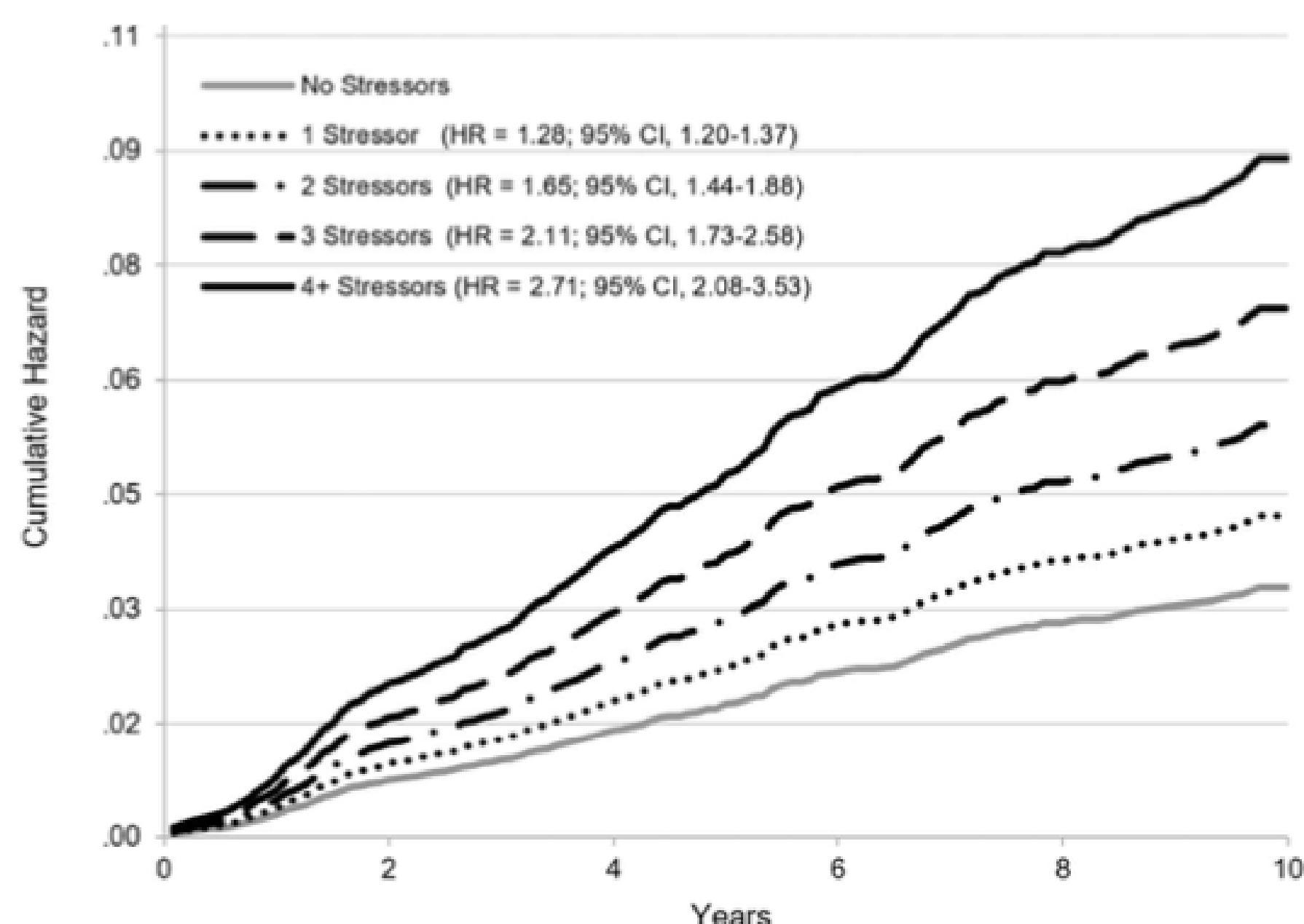
*"In adults with a prior MI, we found that risks of a recurrent event were upward of 70% to 185% greater in those with two to four or more chronic stressors compared with those who reported no stressors. "*

## RESULTS/CONCLUSION

Exposure to multiple chronic stressors had large and incremental associations with risks of MI that were not fully accounted for by socioeconomic, behavioral, psychosocial, or clinical factors.

## CONCLUSION

Chronic life stressors are significant independent risk factors for cardiovascular events in US older adults. The risks associated with multiple chronic stressors were especially high in adults with a previous MI.



## NEXT STEPS

- Early identification and/or interventions to mitigate the negative consequences of multiple chronic stressors to reduce risks of MI and other adverse outcomes.
- Investigate whether biomedical, behavioral, or psychological resources can lessen the unhealthy stress response(s) that result from major life events such as job loss, divorce, and sickness.

