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How to spot a heart attack soon after it occurs

The sooner an individual who has had a heart attack is treated, the better their chance of survival and the less permanent damage is done to their heart. So, Robert Gerszten and colleagues, at Massachusetts General Hospital, Charlestown, have developed a new method for early detection of a heart attack.

In the study, blood samples were collected before and after a number of patients with the heart condition hypertrophic cardiomyopathy were treated using a medical procedure that creates a small controlled heart attack. These samples were then analyzed by a method known as metabolite profiling. Changes in a number of metabolites were observed only 10 minutes after the planned heart attack. This same signature of changes was observed in a second series of patients undergoing the same procedure and in a number of patients spontaneously having a heart attack. The authors believe that no other method can detect changes indicating a heart attack so soon after it has occurred, and hope that their approach can be used to improve early detection of a heart attack.

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TITLE: Metabolite profiling of blood from individuals undergoing planned myocardial infarction reveals early markers of myocardial injury

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