

SCA Facts

There are an estimated 382,800 out of hospital sudden cardiac arrests (OHCA) treated by EMS in the US each year.¹ The best survival statistics available today indicate that in *communities that measure their survival rates*, only about 10% of OHCA victims survive²; this is known as the “overall” survival rate. Survival in communities that are not measuring is likely half of that rate. Because only a handful of communities currently measure SCA survival,^{2,3} across most of the US, the national overall survival rate is likely much less than 10%.

While the odds of surviving OHCA are extremely poor, it should be noted that the 10% survival rates represent survival among **ALL** OHCA victims, regardless of presenting rhythm. Patients who present in ventricular fibrillation, particularly those who are EMS-treated, bystander-witnessed, and in ventricular fibrillation have the best chance of survival among all cardiac arrest victims. Survival rates for this group of SCA victims often serve as a sentinel measure for the effectiveness of a community's system of care.

Take Home Points

- Overall survival from OHCA (all rhythms, witnessed and un-witnessed) in the US is around 10% in communities that measure.
- Survival for EMS treated, bystander witnessed, VF OHCA in the US is around 30% in communities that measure.
- Survival for both overall and EMS treated, bystander witnessed, VF OHCA are likely considerably lower in communities that don't measure.
- There is wide variability in EMS-treated, bystander witnessed, VF OHCA survival rates across the country, ranging from 7.7% to 39.9%³

References

1. Roger VL, Go AS, Lloyd-Jones DM, et al. Heart disease and stroke statistics--2012 update: a report from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. Jan 3 2012;125(1):e2-e220.
2. McNally B, Robb R, Mehta M, et al. Out-of-hospital cardiac arrest surveillance --- Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival (CARES), United States, October 1, 2005--December 31, 2010. *MMWR. Surveillance summaries : Morbidity and mortality weekly report. Surveillance summaries / CDC*. Jul 29 2011;60(8):1-19.
3. Nichol G, Thomas E, Callaway CW, et al. Regional variation in out-of-hospital cardiac arrest incidence and outcome. *JAMA : the journal of the American Medical Association*. Sep 24 2008;300(12):1423-1431.