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## Authors and Disclosures

### Journalist

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#### Sue Hughes

Sue Hughes is a journalist for Medscape. She joined theheart.org, part of the WebMD Professional Network, in 2000. She was previously science editor of Scrip World Pharmaceutical News. Graduating in pharmacy from Manchester University, UK, she started her career as a hospital pharmacist before moving as a journalist to a UK pharmacy trade publication. She can be reached at [Shughes@webmd.net](mailto:Shughes@webmd.net).

### From Heartwire

## Fast Decline in Functional Tests Predicts PAD Outcomes



Sue Hughes

February 18, 2011 (Chicago, Illinois) — Decline in functional performance over two years predicted greater longer-term mobility loss and mortality in people with peripheral arterial disease (PAD), a new study shows [1].

The study, published in the February 22, 2011 issue of the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, was conducted by a group led by **Dr Mary McDermott** (Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago, IL).

They assessed four measures of functional performance--the six-minute-walk test, walking velocity over 4 m at usual and fastest pace, and the short physical performance battery--at baseline and annually for two years in 440 patients with PAD. After a median follow-up of 44.5 months after functional change was assessed, results showed that patients in the tertile with the greatest six-minute-walk decline had higher subsequent mobility loss, all-cause mortality, and cardiovascular mortality than those with the smallest six-minute-walk decline. Similar results were seen for 4-m walking velocity, and faster decline in any of the tests was associated with an increased rate of subsequent mobility loss.

The authors point out that these functional performance measures are reliable, objective measures of lower-extremity performance that can be administered in the office setting. They require a short amount of time and only a stopwatch to administer. They conclude: "Based on findings reported here, clinicians can potentially use serial, annual measures of functional performance over two years of follow-up to identify people with PAD who are at increased risk for mobility loss and mortality."

They add that further study is needed to determine whether preventing functional decline can protect against mobility loss and mortality among individuals with PAD.

### References

1. McDermott MM, Liu K, Ferrucci L, et al. Decline in functional performance predicts later increased mobility loss and mortality in peripheral arterial disease. *J Am Coll Cardiol* 2011; 57:962–70.