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## Unraveling the role of sense of coherence in coronary heart disease patients

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### **Summary for Communication**

Coronary heart disease (CHD) remains the leading cause of death in the European Union, especially in several Central European countries. Sense of coherence (SOC) that is the ability to understand and manage all sorts of experiences in a positive way, is increasingly recognised as an important predictor of CHD outcomes. The aim of this study was to explore the role of SOC in Roma and non-Roma CHD patients in Slovakia. The study provides evidence on the potential utility of SOC in cardiovascular care, prevention, rehabilitation and research.

It shows that CHD patients with a low SOC before treatment are less likely to improve their health behaviours after cardiac treatment. SOC thus deserves attention within the evidence-based framework for the planning of promotion or improvement of health-related behaviours. We also found that a higher SOC is a strong predictor of better health-related quality of life (HRQoL). This supports the idea that SOC is a universal predictor of HRQoL among patients with chronic disease conditions. Third, we found that SOC mediates the effect of from higher hostility on worse mental HRQoL, with hostility being much higher in Roma than in non-Roma CHD patients. Fourth, we found that SOC is lower among Roma CHD patients than among non-Roma CHD patients, and anxiety higher. These findings regarding the health of the Roma population are really novel – hostility as a mediator between Roma ethnicity and HRQoL, and the differences in SOC between Roma and non-Roma CHD patients. They provide cues for a better understanding of the poorer health of this ethnic group, and for improvement of prevention, cure and care among them and among CHD patients in general.