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Risks of heart attack from Vioxx occur earlier than first thought, study says

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MONTREAL (CP) - A new study suggests the risks of heart attack from taking Vioxx may occur much earlier than previously believed.

The study by the McGill University Hospital Centre reveals that some patients suffered a heart attack within the first two weeks of taking the anti-inflammatory drug. Vioxx was voluntarily withdrawn from the market in September 2004, after another study showed it doubled patients' risk of heart attacks and strokes after 18 months of use.

Researcher Linda Levesque says a McGill study last year concluded that 239 Quebec seniors suffered heart attacks while taking Vioxx between 1999 and 2002.

The latest research shows one in four of those actually had the heart attack within two weeks of their first prescription.

The average age of the 239 individuals was 78.

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