

# Therapeutic Hypothermia Ineffective in Patients with Hypothermia



This guy desperately needs an ice bath

**LOUISVILLE, KY** - Therapeutic hypothermia, the deliberate reduction of core body temperature to 32 to 34 degrees Celsius, was found to be ineffective and even harmful in the treatment of patients suffering from hypothermia, according to a new study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*.

“We’ve known about the potential benefits of therapeutic hypothermia since 2002, but this is the first study that demonstrates its potential harms,” explained Dr. Howard Bauchner, Editor-in-Chief for *JAMA*, who prefers to have ice cream outdoors in the middle of winter. “Thanks to this study, we have a better understanding: lowering the body temperature of a patient who is already hypothermic may not be the best intervention.”

The Hypothermia After Hypothermia (HAH) study was stopped early when researchers saw the therapeutic hypothermia protocol exacerbated fluid and [electrolyte imbalances](#); arrhythmias including [bradycardia](#) and atrioventricular blocks; coagulation issues; and shivering, of all things.

“What was telling was how quickly the hypothermic study patients complained and then decompensated when they were given any of a combination of a ice packs, rapid cold-fluid infusions, and cooling blankets,” said one of the authors of the HAH study, Dr. Sara Beth Snow, who personally likes nothing better than a hot tea on a 100-degree, humid sunny day completely devoid of clouds or shade. “The study was terminated, but then we observed how these patients seemed to turn around when they were given warm blankets, [hot soup](#), and personal heaters. It was completely unexpected.”

Seeing that there may be a role for therapeutic hyperthermia, Snow already has a study in the works.

“I’ve already started enrolling patients for our Hyperthermia After Hyperthermia study, or HAH 2,” continued Snow. “It’s hard to know what this trial will reveal, but that’s why research is so important. There is no other way we would discover such critical breakthroughs.”