

Hospital on alert for 'election stress disorder' influx

A particularly stressful event can potentially lead to a panic attack

By [Alexandria Hein](#) | Fox News

With no clear winner in [2020's presidential race](#) and potential lawsuits over ballot counting only threatening to further delay officials from declaring a winner, at least one hospital in California is gearing up for an influx of patients suffering from ["election stress disorder."](#)

"We've asked the staff to be extra aware for those patients that are presenting with symptoms that could represent an acute heart attack or an acute neurologic disease like a stroke," Dr. Paul Silka, emergency department medical director at Regional Medical Center in San Jose, [told KTVU](#).

Silka, who told the news outlet that the staff is preparing based on trends seen in Florida following the 2016 election, said the hospital could see an increase of about 25 extra patients a day due to election stress.

"There's great evidence that emotions, high-stress events: soccer games, Super Bowl, earthquakes can trigger hormonal release," [Silka told the news outlet](#).

Other experts have said the election is no different, especially with the amount of social media and news coverage dedicated to this year's contentious race potentially acting as a trigger. Mental health concerns have already been at the forefront for many physicians do to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

A particularly stressful or anxious event could potentially lead to a panic attack, which could be a frightening experience for someone, especially for those who haven't previously experienced it.

"A panic attack is your body feeling like there is an imminent danger, but in this case it is a misread," Coral Seco, LMHC at [Family Recovery Specialists](#), a [Delphi Behavioral Health Group](#) facility, told Fox News. "Signs of a panic attack can be: increase in heart rate, your muscles contract/stiffen up, nausea, dizziness/disorientation, hot flashes, not having a sense of reality, or pain going up your arms."

Seco said it's important to recognize what the signs feel like and to practice self-care in instances or on days when you know you may be more overwhelmed.

"Panic attacks can come out of nowhere and tend to be a disabling component of anxiety," Seco said.

Excessive fears or worrying, fatigue or insomnia, as well as an inability to focus, irritability, changes to weight, and a lack of motivation, are also signs to watch for when it comes to mental health, Dr. Barbara Nosal, PhD, LMFT, LADC, and chief clinical officer at [Newport Institute](#), previously told Fox News.

"If feelings of depression are impacting physical health and other areas of life, talking with family and friends may help," Nosal said. "The best approach is to speak with a professional."