



New Treatments Have Impact on Death Rates (图)

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7 May 2007, In the largest study of its kind, research led by the University analysed hospital treatment and outcomes for 44,372 patients admitted to 113 hospitals in 14 countries with heart attacks or unstable angina (threatened heart attacks).

The study, published in the Journal of American Medicine, also established a decline in heart failure - a progressive disorder when damage to the heart weakens the cardiovascular system and poor heart muscle function causes fluid in the lungs.

This is the first time such findings relating to heart failure, a chronic condition often requiring specialised nursing care in the community, have been made.

In patients admitted with a severe heart attack, where the arteries were completely blocked, death rates reduced from 8.4 to 4.5 per cent.

Their risk of heart failure also nearly halved with a reduction from 20 to 11 per cent. For every 1,000 patients presenting themselves to hospital this means 39 fewer deaths and 90 less patients with new heart failure.

Patients who suffered from severe heart attacks also saw subsequent rates of critical heart failure - cardiogenic shock - reduce from 7.1 to 4.7 per cent. This is important as 70 per cent of patients with cardiogenic shock die.

Professor Keith Fox, British Heart Foundation professor of cardiology at the University, said:

“We know that advances in medical treatments have improved outcomes due to large scale trials of therapies but there has been a substantial gap in knowing how this relates to how new drugs and procedures are being used and implemented in hospitals.

“Our study enables us to look at differences in practice in a clinical setting over time and it has reflected significant changes in how patients with heart attacks are treated, showing that guidelines are being followed. As a result there is a major reduction in death rates.

“Our study supports the fact that hospitals are using new treatments effectively. Patients now have a much reduced risk of dying or having another stroke while being treated in hospital and are also less likely to suffer a stroke or further heart attack once they have been discharged.”

The study looked at patients between July 1999 and the end of 2006. Countries involved in the study included Britain, the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Belgium, Spain and Poland.

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