



Heart Attack Failures Linked To 30,000 Deaths

A study suggests doctors are failing to advise one in ten heart attack victims on how to improve their chances of survival.

Around 33,000 deaths may have been prevented over a decade if doctors followed appropriate heart attack after-care guidelines, according to a study.

The study, funded by the British Heart Foundation, looked at 13 treatments recommended for patients who suffered a NSTEMI, the most common type of heart attack where the blood flow to the heart is partially blocked.

They found that for patients treated across 247 hospitals in England and Wales between 2003 and 2013, nearly 90% did not receive at least one of the interventions they should have been given.

Advice to stop smoking, a rehabilitation programme to improve patients' diet, and the prescription of statin drugs to reduce cholesterol were among missed treatments that would have given patients the best chance of survival.

Other frequently missed interventions included the prescription of an anti-blood clotting drug known as a P2Y12 inhibitor.

"If all eligible patients in the study had received optimal care at the time of guideline publication, then 32,765 deaths may have been prevented," said researchers from the University of Leeds and University College London.

Dr Chris Gale, associate professor of cardiovascular health sciences at the Leeds Institute of

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Cardiovascular and Metabolic Medicine, said: "What we've highlighted here is the unacceptable deficit in the care being given to people after they've had an NSTEMI heart attack.

"We calculate that roughly one patient per month per hospital in England and Wales is losing their life as a direct consequence of this deficit.

"The good news is that now we've identified the problem, we can certainly fix it. Simple interventions, such as prescribing statins, are being missed, and this is resulting in loss of life."

The results of the study have been published in the European Heart Journal: Acute Cardiovascular Care.

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