

Heart Failure Survival Rates Show No Signs of Improvement



Background

Heart failure is a common long term condition affecting around 900,000 people in the United Kingdom and an estimated 1-2 in every 100 adults in Western populations. Patients with heart failure often complain of shortness of breath and fatigue when they visit their GP.

“The study shows that prognosis has not improved over the course of the analysis period.”

The outcome of heart failure is known to be poor, worse than some cancers, but clinical trials show drug treatments can improve the outlook for many.

Whilst we know about the outcomes for patients with heart failure diagnosed in hospital or who had been picked up after screening, we didn't know the outcomes for patients diagnosed in Primary Care or who weren't admitted to hospital.

The aim of this study was to determine the one, five and ten year survival rates of patients diagnosed with heart failure in primary care and to examine whether prognosis has improved from 1998 to 2012.

Findings

During the study period, 54,313 patients were diagnosed for the first time with heart failure.

Overall survival rates for the heart failure group were:

- At 1 year: 81.3% (95%CI, 80.9-81.6)
- At 5 years: 51.5% (95%CI, 51.0-52.0)
- At 10 years: 29.5% (95%CI, 28.9-30.2)

Survival did not improve between 1998 and 2012.

Findings were similar for heart failure cases where there was documentation to confirm the diagnosis and for cases that were unconfirmed.

Conclusion

The study shows that prognosis has not improved over the course of the analysis period. This contrasts considerably with some cancers over the same time period where prognosis improved greatly.

Recommendations for Practice

“Getting an accurate estimate of heart failure prognosis is vital for those who commission healthcare services, so resources can be allocated appropriately.”

– Dr Clare Taylor, primary care researcher and lead author on the study.

Reference and further info:

Clare J Taylor, Ronan Ryan, Linda Nichols, Nicola Gale, FD Richard Hobbs, Tom Marshall; Survival following a diagnosis of heart failure in primary care. *Family Practice* (2017) cmw145.

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About the NIHR CLAHRCs

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