



Understanding Heart Failure: Causes, Symptoms, and Treatment

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INTRODUCTION

Heart failure, often referred to as Congestive Heart Failure (CHF), is a chronic and progressive condition in which the heart is unable to pump sufficient blood to meet the body's needs. This condition can affect one or both sides of the heart, leading to a build-up of fluid in the lungs, liver, abdomen, and lower extremities. Heart failure is a major health concern, affecting millions of people worldwide and leading to significant morbidity and mortality. Common causes of heart failure include coronary artery disease, heart attack, high blood pressure, atrial fibrillation, alular heart disease, excessive alcohol consumption, infection, and cardiomyopathy. These cause heart failure by altering the structure or the function of the heart or in some cases both. There are different types of heart failure: right-sided heart failure, which affects the right heart, left-sided heart failure, which affects the left heart, and biventricular heart failure, which affects both sides of the heart. Left-sided heart failure may be present with a reduced ejection fraction or with a preserved ejection fraction. Heart failure is not the same as cardiac arrest, in which blood flow stops completely due to the failure of the heart to pump.

DESCRIPTION

Diagnosis is based on symptoms, physical findings, and echocardiography. Blood tests, and a chest X-ray may be useful to determine the underlying cause. Treatment depends on severity and case. For people with chronic, stable, mild heart failure, treatment usually consists of lifestyle changes, such as not smoking, physical exercise, and dietary changes, as well as medications. In heart failure due to left ventricular dysfunction,

angiotensin-converting-enzyme inhibitors, angiotensin receptor blockers, or angiotensin receptor-neprilysin inhibitors, along with beta blockers, mineralocorticoid receptor antagonists and SGLT2 inhibitors are recommended. Diuretics may also be prescribed to prevent fluid retention and the resulting shortness of breath. Depending on the case, an implanted device such as a pacemaker or implantable cardiac defibrillator may sometimes be recommended. In some moderate or more severe cases, cardiac resynchronization therapy or cardiac contractility modulation may be beneficial. In severe disease that persists despite all other measures, a cardiac assist device ventricular assist device, or, occasionally, heart transplantation may be recommended. Heart failure often leads to more drastic health impairments than failure of other, similarly complex organs such as the kidneys or liver. In 2015, it affected about 40 million people worldwide. Overall, heart failure affects about 2% of adults, and more than 10% of those over the age of 70. Rates are predicted to increase. The risk of death in the first year after diagnosis is about 35%, while the risk of death in the second year is less than 10% in those still alive. The risk of death is comparable to that of some cancers.

CONCLUSION

Heart failure is a complex and challenging condition, but with proper management, many individuals can lead active and fulfilling lives. Understanding the causes, recognizing the symptoms, and seeking early diagnosis and treatment are crucial for improving outcomes. By adopting healthy lifestyle habits and working closely with healthcare providers, those at risk can take proactive steps to prevent the onset of heart failure and manage its progression effectively.

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