

Heart Failure Backgrounder

Fast facts:

- 20 million people globally and around 900,000 people in the UK have heart failure (HF)^{1,2}. HF hospital admissions are projected to rise by 50% over the next 25 years, largely as a result of an ageing population¹
- HF accounts for a total of 1 million inpatient bed days and 5% of all emergency and medical admissions to UK hospitals¹
- HF has a poor prognosis: Around 60% of patients diagnosed with HF die within 5 years³
- HF presents a growing health-economic burden globally, and consumes almost 2% of the National Health Service (NHS) budget in the UK which equates to approximately £1.9 billion⁴⁻¹²

HF is a debilitating and potentially life-threatening condition where the heart cannot pump enough blood around the body. In most cases this is because the heart muscle responsible for the pumping action weakens over time or becomes too stiff².

Causes: HF often occurs when the heart muscle has been injured. This can happen following a heart attack or other illnesses affecting the heart, or by damage sustained more gradually due to long term conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, high cholesterol, excess alcohol consumption or drug abuse¹³. In most cases heart failure does not have a single cause^{2,13}.

Symptoms: For those living with heart failure, symptoms can be very debilitating and affect Quality of Life^{14,15}

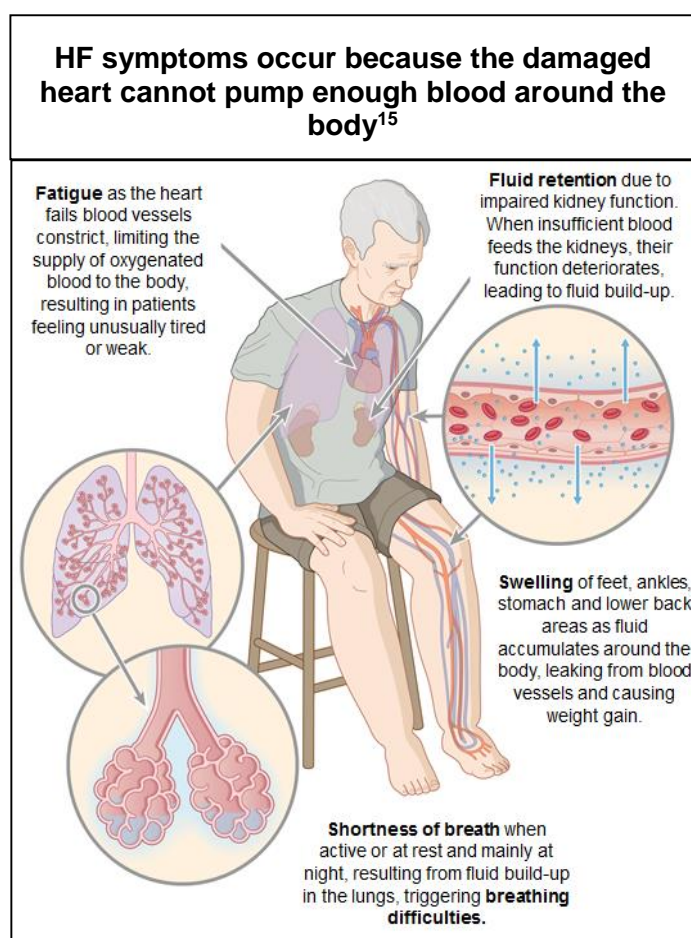
- Breathlessness¹⁵
- Fatigue or tiredness¹⁵
- Reduced exercise tolerance¹⁵
- Ankle swelling¹⁵

HF may progress and slowly worsen over time¹³. This progressive and persistent condition is known as chronic heart failure (CHF) but can also be punctuated by acute episodes (acute heart failure, AHF) where symptoms worsen rapidly resulting in the need for hospitalisation. AHF can also develop in people without a history of CHF¹⁵.

Risk: The risk of developing HF increases with age and in general tends to be more common in men than women¹³. About 1 in 5 individuals (20%) will develop heart failure at some point in their lives⁹.

Burden: HF presents a major and growing health-economic burden that currently exceeds \$45 billion worldwide and consumes almost 2% of the National Health Service (NHS) budget in the UK equating to £1.9 billion⁴⁻¹². Studies show that quality of life is worse for HF patients than for those with other chronic conditions¹⁴. It has a major personal impact, with patients struggling in their daily lives due to worsening symptoms¹⁴.

Treatment: HF is a complex condition and is therefore challenging to manage¹⁵. It is currently incurable, leading to the death of around 60% of all patients within five years of hospitalisation³. Current treatments



aim to primarily manage debilitating symptoms such as congestion and shortness of breath¹⁵. There is an urgent need for new and effective treatments that relieve symptoms without damaging the kidneys, reduce the number of costly hospitalisations and improve the mortality and morbidity of these seriously ill patients.

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References

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