

COVID-19 and Higher Mortality in Acute Heart Failure Patients



Patients with acute heart failure nearly double their risk of dying if they get COVID-19, according to new research published in ESC Heart Failure. These findings highlight the need for patients with heart failure to take extra precautions to avoid catching COVID-19.

According to lead investigator, Dr. Amardeep Dastidar, a consultant interventional cardiologist at North Bristol NHS Trust and Bristol Heart Institute, UK, heart failure patients must be prioritised for COVID-19 vaccination once its available. In the meantime, these patients should be considered a high-risk group and should maintain social distancing and wear a face mask to prevent infection.

The study examined referral rates for acute heart failure during the pandemic and 30-day mortality. The analysis included 283 patients with acute heart failure admitted to the cardiology department of North Bristol NHS Trust. Two-thirds of the patients had chronic heart failure and presented with an acute deterioration. The date of the first UK coronavirus death, 2 March 2020, was the cut-off to define two groups: before-COVID (7 January to 2 March; eight weeks) and after-COVID (3 March to 27 April; eight weeks; i.e. during the pandemic).

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The 30-day mortality rate of patients with acute heart failure nearly doubled during the pandemic. Some 11% of patients in the before-COVID group died within 30 days compared to 21% of the after-COVID group.

It is important to note that there was a substantial drop in admissions for acute heart failure during the pandemic. This indicates delayed reporting of symptoms, and anxiety regarding hospital attendance. It is thus critical to encourage patients to seek medical attention if needed.

The researchers examined what factors may have been responsible for the higher death rate during the pandemic. Older age and admission during the pandemic were linked with death. When patients with a positive COVID test were removed from the analysis, there was no difference in mortality between the before- and after-COVID groups – indicating that patients with both acute heart failure and COVID-19 had a poorer prognosis.

Source: [ESC](#)

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