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Europe: New Sudden Cardiac Death Database to Save Lives

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A database launched recently will help identify the incidence and causes of sudden cardiac death and save the lives of people who may currently be at risk from the inherited heart condition that can strike without warning. Designed by pathologists and cardiologists, and funded by the Department of Health, the database will be a key tool in understanding the incidence and causes of inheritable conditions that can cause sudden cardiac death.

Sudden cardiac death can happen unexpectedly in apparently fit and healthy people. The main cause for those under the age of 35 is an inheritable heart condition.

The new database will help pathologists record cases referred to them by coroners. This information will ultimately allow doctors to understand better where and why these inheritable heart conditions are occurring, and so help save lives.

With a greater knowledge of the incidence, prevalence and causes of sudden cardiac death, doctors will be able to identify better people at risk from one of these conditions and help them get access to the services they need. Close family members of victims of sudden cardiac death will be referred to specialist inherited cardiac conditions centres where they will be offered counselling and support.

Professor Roger Boyle, National Director for Heart Disease and Stroke said, "This database will provide invaluable information for doctors on the causes, incidence and prevalence of sudden cardiac death. As well as improving our understanding of inherited cardiovascular disease it will actually save lives by identifying young victims of sudden cardiac death and helping their families reduce their own risk."

Health Minister Ann Keen said, "This announcement shows that the Government is continuing to build on the very significant progress already made in the prevention of cardiovascular disease. We met our pledge to reduce deaths from cardiovascular disease by 40 per cent five years earlier than the 2010 target and are committed to going still further."

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