February is Heart Health Month - Radiology Plays a Critical Role in Cardiac Health

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are the number one cause of death and disability globally. Hypertension is a leading risk factor for CVD and causes over 10 million deaths worldwide each year.

Over the last 30 years, deaths and disability from cardiovascular disease have been steadily rising across the globe. In 2019 alone, the condition, which includes heart disease and stroke, was responsible for a staggering one-third of all deaths worldwide

The rapid rise in CVD burden in most of the low- and middle- income countries is due to socio-economic changes, increase in life span and acquisition of lifestyle related risk factors.

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CARDIOVASCULAR Disease Across the GLOBE

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are the leading cause of death globally, causing an estimated 17.9 million deaths each year. More than four out of five of these deaths are due to heart attack and stroke. One-third of these deaths occur prematurely in people under 70 years old. Radiologists continue to be strong advocates for heart screening because it is important to detect cardiovascular disease as early as possible.

17.9 million

deaths per year from cardiovascular diseases

85%

Of these deaths, 85% were due to heart attack and stroke

RISK FACTORS

Most cardiovascular diseases can be prevented by addressing behavioral risk factors, including

- Tobacco use
- Unhealthy diet and obesity
- Physical inactivity
- Harmful use of alcohol

SCREENING

Doctors use a variety of tests to screen for heart disease, including

- Calcium scoring with cardiac CT
- Coronary CT angiography
- Myocardial perfusion imaging
- Coronary catheter angiography
- Cardiac MRI
- Cardiac nuclear medicine imaging

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One-third of deaths occur prematurely in people under 70 years old

RSNA RESOURCES

- *Radiology: Cardiothoracic Imaging*, online journal emphasizing research advances and technical developments in medical imaging that drive cardiothoracic medicine.
- Follow the *Radiology: Cardiothoracic Imaging* editor on Twitter @RadiologyCTI_Editor
- Access Cardiac Radiology CME activities in the RSNA Online Learning Center, *RSNA.org/LearningCenter*.
- Search for cardiac cases and images in RSNA Case Collection, *Cases.RSNA.org*.

EQUITY

- At least three-quarters of the world's deaths from CVDs occur in low-and middle-income countries.
- This can be due to a lack of primary health care programs for early detection and treatment of people with risk factors for CVDs

Source: World Health Organization Cardiovascular Health Topics, *who.int/health-topics*

Source: RSNA

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