

New Blood Test can Diagnose Inherited Heart Conditions



The British Heart Foundation has announced the development of a new genetic test that could help diagnose people with inherited heart conditions. The research investigated a group of genes that could be checked reliably for all known heart condition genes by using one simple test. The research is published in the *Journal of Cardiovascular Translational Research*.

According to the British Heart Foundation, previous tests that have been in use have limited value as they only consider a small number of genes and could identify specific conditions. They also resulted in greater costs, more work and longer delays in diagnosis.

This new test is expected to be more accurate and reliable and checks 174 genes. It is already been trialed at Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Foundation Trust and nearly 40 patients are being tested with it each month.

Dr James Ware, a consultant cardiologist at the Brompton who helped lead this study believes that genetic tests are invaluable when it comes to managing inherited heart conditions. They can be extremely useful when making initial diagnosis as well as choosing the right treatment for the patient. But most of all, these tests provide the greatest benefit in looking after the patient's family. "Without a genetic test, we often have to keep the whole family under regular surveillance for many years, because some of these conditions may not develop until later in life. This is hugely costly for both the families and the health system. By contrast, when a genetic test reveals the precise genetic abnormality causing the condition in one member of the family, it becomes simple to test other family members. Those who do not carry the faulty gene copy can be reassured and spared countless hospital visits."

Inherited heart conditions are often passed down through families. People of any age can be affected by it and many see the first sign of it when a family member suddenly dies. This new test could potentially increase the number of families who could benefit from knowing where they stand.

Professor Peter Weissberg, Medical Director at the British Heart Foundation explains that with new technology and advancement, it is now possible to identify more and more genetic mutations that could cause heart conditions. As this field of research continues to evolve, it is possible to achieve greater diagnostic accuracy at reduced costs. This new test could identify the causative gene mutation in a patient with an inherited heart condition and could enable their relatives to be tested for the same gene quite easily.

Source: [British Heart Foundation](#)

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