



New Blood Test Rules Out Heart Attack



According to research published by Bournemouth University, a new test rules out heart attacks in patients and could potentially reduce hospital admissions by as much as 40 percent. The research has published in the *BMJ Heart Journal*.

The research administered a blood test to patients who came to the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Departments with chest pain. They found that the quick protocol could reduce the admission rates of patients with heart attack symptoms.

Approximately 10 percent of A&E attendance comprises of patients with chest pain. These patients have to wait for up to 12 hours in order to be certain that there is no evidence of a heart attack.

The study, conducted by Dr. Edward Carlton, used information provided by patients about their pain, whether they were short of breath and whether they had a heart attack. An ECG and a new blood test called high-sensitivity troponin was used to rule out heart-attacks.

Blood tests to rule out heart attacks is not a new practice but to date, there was no clinically acceptable protocol that allowed the discharge of a significant number of patients without a prolonged hospital stay. This research outlines a novel framework using a single high-sensitivity troponin blood test at presentation to A&E. By using this test, patients can be reassured of their condition earlier and do not have to go through long waiting times for a second blood test.

It is believed that this new and simple diagnostic tool could help reduce the burden on UK hospitals and A&E departments. Already, the A&E departments have come under close scrutiny for missing the government's target that 95 percent of patients should be seen within four hours of presenting to an NHS hospital.

According to Dr. Carlton, "We were really pleased with the findings of the research as we have shown that our simple but novel diagnostic strategy can potentially reduce the increasing burden on hospitals. It is my hope that this diagnostic tool can be used widely within hospitals in the UK to rule out heart attacks, allay the fears of patients and improve productivity within hospitals. This is important research in improving patient care for patients in the NHS and another exciting discovery for Bournemouth University."

Source: BMJ Heart Journal

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