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New European Guidelines On Heart Attack Management Put Emphasis On Speed Of Action

Professor Frans Van de Werf (Leuven, Belgium), chairman of the Task Force, describes the guidelines as "important" and says their broad uptake and adoption would make a "huge difference" to heart attack survival rates.

The new guidelines cover management of a common type of classical heart attack known as STEMI (ST-segment elevation acute myocardial infarction), a reference to its appearance on an ECG. Around one-third of all acute coronary events are diagnosed as STEMI.

Although precise numbers are missing, it is likely that 30-50 per cent of victims of heart attack die before reaching the hospital, most of them in the first hours after the onset of symptoms. While this fatality rate has remained fairly constant in recent years, survival rates in hospital have markedly improved

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