

Study: public ignorant about heart failure

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Medical scientists say an international survey of the public's awareness of heart failure has revealed a woeful and worrying level of ignorance.

Although about 90 percent of nearly 8,000 randomly selected people from the nine European nations had heard of heart failure, researchers found only 3 percent could identify the condition from a description of typical symptoms -- and that's despite 6 percent saying they had someone in their family with heart failure.

"The low awareness of (heart failure) we found is shocking and is putting lives at risk," said lead author Dr. Willem Remme, director of the Sticares Cardiovascular Research Institute in Rhoon, Netherlands.

"It has serious implications ... for public health throughout Europe," said Remme. "If (people) don't understand how common and how life-threatening this condition is, then they are not likely to seek medical help early, and they are also unlikely to demand appropriate measures from healthcare providers."

The study appears in the European Heart Journal.

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