



Symptoms and Significance of Heart Failure

Virginia Austen*

Department of Cardiology, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands

DESCRIPTION

Heart failure, also known as congestive heart failure, is a syndrome that consists of a collection of signs and symptoms caused by a malfunction in the heart's blood pumping function. Shortness of breath, extreme fatigue, and leg swelling are common symptoms. Shortness of breath can occur during exercise or while lying down, and it can wake people up at night. Chest pain, including angina, is rarely caused by heart failure, but it can happen if the heart failure was caused by a heart attack. The severity of symptoms during exercise is used to determine the severity of heart failure. Obesity, kidney failure, liver disease, anemia, and thyroid disease are all conditions that can cause symptoms similar to heart failure. Heart failure is commonly caused by coronary artery disease, a heart attack, high blood pressure, atrial fibrillation, valvular heart disease, excessive alcohol consumption, infection, and cardiomyopathy. These cause heart failure by affecting the structure or function of the heart, or in some cases both. Right-sided heart failure is the most common type of heart failure. Left-sided heart failure can have a reduced or preserved ejection fraction. Heart failure is not the same as cardiac arrest, which occurs when blood flow ceases completely due to the inability of the heart to pump effectively.

Symptoms, physical findings, and echocardiography are used to make a diagnosis. Blood tests and a chest x-ray may be helpful in determining the root cause. Treatment is determined by the severity and nature of the case. Treatment for chronic, stable, mild heart failure typically consists of lifestyle changes such as quitting smoking, increasing physical activity, and making dietary

changes, as well as medications. Angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors, angiotensin receptor blockers, or valsartan or sacubitril, in addition to beta blockers, are recommended in heart failure caused by left ventricular dysfunction. Aldosterone antagonists or hydralazine with a nitrate can be used in severe disease. Diuretics may also be prescribed to prevent fluid retention and shortness of breath. An implanted device, such as a pacemaker or implantable cardiac defibrillator, may be recommended depending on the circumstances.

Cardiovascular resynchronization therapy or cardiac contractility modulation may be beneficial in some moderate-to-severe cases. A cardiac assist device, ventricular assist device, or, in rare cases, heart transplantation may be recommended if severe disease persists despite all other measures. Heart failure is the leading cause of hospitalization and readmission in older adults, and it is a common, costly, and potentially fatal condition.

Heart failure frequently causes more severe health problems than failure of other, similarly complex organs such as the kidneys or liver. It affected approximately 40 million people worldwide in 2015. Heart failure affects about 2% of adults and up to 10% of those over the age of 65. Rates are expected to rise.

For those who are still alive, the risk of death in the first year after diagnosis is approximately 35%, while the risk of death in the second year is less than 10%. The death risk is comparable to that of some cancers. The disease accounts for 5% of emergency hospital admissions in the United Kingdom. Heart failure has been documented since ancient times, with the Ebers Papyrus mentioning it around 1550 BCE.

Correspondence to: Virginia Austen, Department of Cardiology, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands, E-mail: Virginiaausten@gmail.com

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