

## **UK Heart Patients Among the Most Under-Treated in Europe, Reveals Major New Report**

**2 December 2011, Shipston on Stour:** Shocking results of the 2010 clinical audit of heart rhythm care were published today. Of the 17 European countries for which data were today published, only Ireland and Norway performed worse than the UK.

Insight is urgently needed into why UK patients with heart rhythm disorders are so poorly-served. The provision of arrhythmia care within the UK is also shown to be wildly uneven leaving patients at the mercy of their postcode instead of in the hands of an equitable and efficient cardiac care service. Patients in Dorset were found to be 80% more likely to get the treatment they required than one living in Warwickshire.

Heart disease is frequently cited at the biggest killer in the UK. While true, nearly half of these deaths result from arrhythmias such as sudden cardiac arrest (SCA), not from coronary artery disease which has a much higher profile. In the UK 100,000 people die each year from SCA yet 80% could be saved if diagnosed and treated appropriately.

Published by the HRUK Audit Group, the *Cardiac Rhythm Management: UK National Clinical Audit* report tracks treatment with implantable cardiac devices which, in many cases, provide the only life-saving option available for patients, such as those at risk of SCA. The report is available from [www.devicesurvey.com](http://www.devicesurvey.com).

“The UK even fails to meet its own standards of arrhythmia care.” Added Trudie Lobban, Founder and CEO of the Arrhythmia Alliance. “For each type of implantable device, there is a professionally-agreed rate of implant needed to treat the population. In the UK we fall short of each target in every region of England and Wales. On average, we miss the minimum target by 23%. In the worst performing regions, we miss by a massive 46%. It is vital that we learn why we perform so badly in the UK and why our patients suffer from such inequity of access to the treatments they need.”

**Ends**

### **About implantable cardiac devices**

Implantable devices offer pacing, defibrillation and cardiac resynchronisation to address a huge range of deadly and debilitating heart disorders. They are among the most effective and widely-used treatments for many heart rhythm disorders. They are also cost-effective, simple to implant (requiring only a local anaesthetic for subcutaneous placement) and easy for physicians and their patients to manage. In most cases they are without side effects, require no daily administration, no testing and yet they deliver therapy 24/365 regardless of patient interest, attention, motivation, lifestyle or age. For these reasons, they have become standard treatment for a range of arrhythmic conditions in much of Western Europe.

### **About cardiac arrhythmias**

1. A cardiac arrhythmia is the medical term for an irregular heartbeat or abnormal heart rhythm
2. Arrhythmias may occur at any age. Some are barely perceptible, whereas others can be more dramatic and can lead to, stroke, heart failure and even sudden cardiac arrest (SCA)
3. SCA strikes without warning killing 100,000 people in the UK every year – that's 250 people a day
4. In the UK, less than 5% of victims survive out of hospital
5. SCA kills more people than lung cancer, breast cancer and AIDS combined

### **About Arrhythmia Alliance**

Arrhythmia Alliance was launched in 2004 at the start of the first Arrhythmia Awareness Week in Westminster to raise awareness and highlight the deficiencies in the treatment and care of arrhythmia sufferers. The charity was fundamental in pushing through one of the most essential policy issues to affect cardiology and cardiac patients, resulting in the inclusion of a new Chapter on Arrhythmias and Sudden Cardiac Death in the National Service Framework (NSF).

Since 2004, A-A has continued to grow into an international organisation, and its vision continues to be that "Every person affected by an arrhythmia will receive information, support and rapid access to appropriate treatment". A-A aims to achieve this through advancing awareness, diagnosis, and improved quality of life for all those affected.

### **Notes**

1. Arrhythmia Alliance has patient members across the country who are willing to be interviewed by the media about their arrhythmias. We also have a number of medical professionals and heart specialists who are willing to speak on our behalf



## News Release

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2. Arrhythmia-Alliance founder, Trudie Lobban MBE, and President, Prof. John Camm, and other medical experts are available for interviews
3. For more information, contact Trudie Lobban MBE at [Trudie@heartrhythmcharity.org.uk](mailto:Trudie@heartrhythmcharity.org.uk) or call 07778 233999
4. The A-A website is at [www.heartrhythmcharity.org.uk](http://www.heartrhythmcharity.org.uk)
5. The Cardiac Rhythm Management: UK National Clinical Audit 2010 can be accessed at [www.devicesurvey.com](http://www.devicesurvey.com)