

Report on a health issue- heart disease

Introduction

This essay is a report based on heart disease. Heart disease which is also known as cardiovascular disease is a simple term for conditions that affect the heart and blood vessels. The most common type is coronary heart disease (CHD), which is caused by an accumulation of fatty deposits called atherosclerosis which narrows or blocks the coronary arteries (NHS, 2023). As CHD blocks blood flow to the heart, it can cause critical situations. Typical symptoms of heart disease include angina, shortness of breath, exhaustion, palpitations etc (British Heart Foundation, 2024)

Heart disease is a significant public health issue in the UK and around the world. Within 17.9 million deaths annually, cardiovascular illnesses are the world's largest cause of death (World Health Organisation, 2023). One death occurs every 3 minutes in the UK due to heart issues/ this causes almost 160,000 deaths every year (British Heart Foundation, 2024). These numbers directly indicate how serious heart disease is. It also emphasises the importance of prevention, control, and efficient management techniques.

Consequences of Heart disease for the community and the NHS

Individuals, communities, and the NHS are hugely impacted by heart disease as it can massively lower a person's quality of life. Chronic symptoms such as chest pain, dyspnoea, exhaustion and diminished physical capacity are common in people with heart disease. These symptoms can restrict everyday activities and independence (NHS, 2023). This causes many problems for patients such as the ability to work, interacting with others, and keeping relationships. This can lead to social isolation and mental health problems such as depression and anxiety (British Heart Foundation, 2024).

Heart disease has been known to cause higher rates of disability and early mortality in communities. Therefore, when people are diagnosed with long term heart conditions it is essential that they have families and carers to offer support and continuous aid. In households and communities, this may result in decreased productivity, financial pressure, and mental stress (WHO, 2023). Due to factors like poor food, smoking, physical inactivity, and restricted access to healthcare facilities, communities with higher levels of deprivation typically have higher rates of heart disease, adding to health inequalities (NHS Digital, 2023).

The impact of heart disease on the NHS is significant. Cardiovascular disease costs billions of pounds annually in hospital stays, long term medication, surgery, and rehabilitation services making it one of the costliest conditions treated by the NHS (British Heart Foundation, 2024). Many emergency admissions are related to heart

illness, especially those caused by heart attacks and heart failure. The load of cardiac patients and admissions has caused health sectors such as cardiology wards, a &, and specialised services etc to be heavily under pressure. Furthermore, most patients need long term follow up care, which puts more strain on GP services and outpatient clinics (NHS England, 2023). As the population increases, it is likely that the number of patients with heart disease also increases. This means that it is essential that significant care and prevention is provided.

Control and management of heart disease

Heart disease is managed by many factors including medical treatment, early identification, and prevention. By focusing on modifiable risk factors, public health strategies are essential in lowering the risk of heart disease. National programs such as the NHS Health Checks in the UK aim to identify individuals at risk of heart disease, they do this by tracking blood pressure, cholesterol, BMI, and lifestyle factors (NHS, 2023). By detecting this earlier it lowers the risk of major cardiac events by enabling prompt interventions.

In order to effectively manage heart disease, it is important an individual makes lifestyle changes. A balance diet, frequent exercise, quitting smoking, and cutting back on alcohol use are all stressed by health agencies (British Heart Foundation, 2024). An individual can lessen the strain on their heart by eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables and low in sugar, salt, and saturated fat- this will help in lowering blood pressure and cholesterol (NHS, 2023). As well as this, you can further reduce the risk of cardiovascular issues by doing frequent exercise to strengthen the heart muscle, enhance circulation and aid in keeping a healthy weight.

Medical care also plays a huge part in managing heart disease. Many people need long term medications such as antihypertensives to control blood pressure, statins to lower cholesterol, and anti platelet medications to lower the risk of blood clots (NHS, 2023). In more major cases, surgeries (such as a stent implantation or an angioplasty) may be needed to restore blood flow to the heart (British Heart Foundation, 2024).

Additionally, individuals can begin programs to help with there cardiac rehabilitation. There are many different programs which help with areas such as exercise and emotional support. Research has shown that cardiac rehabilitation enhances both physical and mental health as well as lowering the risk of subsequent cardiac incidents (NHS England, 2023). Overall, the collaborative work of primary care, public health services and specialised NHS services will massively help to effectively address heart disease.

Factors influencing health and wellbeing of people with heart disease

The health and wellbeing of people with heart disease are influenced by many different factors. These include access to healthcare, psychological wellbeing, socioeconomic position, and lifestyle choices.

Lifestyle factors have a massive impact on individuals with heart disease. Smoking is a significant risk for those with heart disease as it damages blood vessels and increases the likelihood of atherosclerosis (British Heart Foundation, 2024). As well as this, having a poor diet and low level of exercise is likely to contribute to obesity, high cholesterol, and diabetes- these factors can cause strain on the heart. It is essential that individuals adopt healthier lifestyle choices to ensure the best health outcomes.

Socioeconomic factors are also important for those managing heart disease. It is known that people who live in poor areas are more likely to suffer from heart disease. This is due to a higher risk of stress, lack of nutritious food, and less possibilities for physical activity (WHO, 2023). As well as this, people who deal with financial struggles may find it harder to take part in lifestyle programs or attend doctor's appointments which could have a major impact on dealing with their health issues. Therefore, groups of people may receive unequal opportunities in dealing with their health.

Being diagnosed with heart disease can also cause psychological issues for patients. After a diagnosis individuals are likely to experience fear, worry, and sadness. Mental health issues can cause people to become less inclined to exercise or take medical advice which may cause further problems (British Heart Foundation, 2024). To overcome this, it is important that individuals receive support from both their family and health professionals.

Additionally, heart disease can also affect the well being of those around the patient. Carers may experience stress, exhaustion, and reduced quality of life which highlights the need for support services and education for families affected by heart disease (NHS, 2023)

Role of health and social care professionals

In order to improve outcomes for those with heart disease, health and social care professionals are necessary. The collaborative working of nurses, physicians, nutritionists, and physiotherapists allows patients to receive the best care possible by receiving treatment, education, and ongoing support. Health professionals are responsible for promoting healthy lifestyles, keeping an eye on risk factors, and ensuring correct medication (NHS England, 2023).

In particular, community-based interventions are crucial. Public health campaigns that encourage physical activity, a balanced diet, and quitting smoking help to lower the prevalence of heart disease in the general population (WHO, 2023).

Additionally, health and social workers can significantly increase quality of life and lessen the long-term effects of heart disease. In order to preserve their independence and general well-being, social workers may also aid people with heart disease who have trouble with everyday tasks.

Conclusion

In summary, heart disease is a severe and pervasive public health concern that impacts people, communities, and healthcare systems in the UK and around the world.

Throughout this essay I spoke about how heart disease can result in long term health issues, a lower quality of life, and early mortality- this puts a huge strain on families, communities, and the NHS. Effective public health programs and early intervention are crucial in dealing with heart disease. This is because many risk factors such as a poor diet, smoking and lack of exercise are preventable. In order to manage and control heart disease it is essential that individuals focus on lifestyle adaptations, medical care, and ongoing assistance from health care professionals.

References

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