

HEART RHYTHM CHARITY RAISES ALARM AT INEQUITY AND VARIABLE QUALITY OF TREATMENT ACROSS THE UK FOR PATIENTS AT RISK OF SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST

50 PERCENT OF HOSPITALS DO NOT MEET THE MINIMUM CRITERIA TO IMPLANT COMPLEX CARDIAC RHYTHM DEVICES

16 FEBRUARY 2017, LONDON, UK: The latest National Cardiac Rhythm Management (CRM) Audit data released today shows significant variation across the UK in the rates of pacemaker and defibrillator implants, and that the UK lags far behind many of its Western European counterparts.

CRM devices are life-saving treatments for heart rhythm disorders including blackouts, syncope and sudden cardiac arrest. It is essential that patients get the right diagnosis and the most appropriate treatment, promptly.

Trudie Lobban MBE, CEO and Founder, Arrhythmia Alliance, the UK's leading Heart Rhythm Charity, is calling on more to be done to ensure every arrhythmia patient receives equitable treatment, wherever they may live in the UK, and will be raising her concerns to the newly formed All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arrhythmias.

"Year on year this report gathers more data to demonstrate the amount of work centres are undertaking to serve arrhythmia patients. Whilst we applaud their endeavours it is still very disappointing to see the low implant numbers compared to many of our European partners."

She added, "Access to available treatments vary significantly from one area to another which is totally unacceptable. Sudden cardiac death is the number one killer in the UK, yet despite this we still see low implant of life-saving devices such as ICDs and pacemakers. We must now use this data to improve and increase access to care to save more lives and to improve the quality of life for all arrhythmia patients."

Key findings of the audit include:

- Pacemaker and defibrillator implant rates in the UK are gradually increasing, BUT they remain consistently low compared to other Western European countries
- There is great variation within the UK in the rates of all types of implants.
- The UK is one of the top countries in Europe performing cardiac resynchronization therapy – a technique that improves the coordination of the heart in patients with heart failure.
- A significant number of UK hospitals continue to perform small numbers of pacemaker and defibrillator implants. For pacemakers, the number of such hospitals has halved in the last year, but for more complex devices, almost 50% of hospitals do not meet the recommended minimal standards.



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Dr Francis Murgatroyd, Chair of the British Heart Rhythm Society Audit Committee and Clinical Lead of the CRM Audit said: "This report highlights that the UK implants fewer pacemakers and defibrillators than other European countries. While some parts of the country have good services, in others patients are half as likely to receive the correct diagnosis and treatment, and may be treated in a centre with very low levels of experience. We propose that commissioners and hospitals tackle this issue on a planned, network basis, to establish standards and pathways of care, and ensure that patients receive the correct diagnosis and treatment wherever they live in the UK."

The audit commissioned and managed by the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP) as part of the National Clinical Audit and Patients Outcomes Programme (NCAPOP) covers 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. The audit is held by the National Institute for Cardiac Outcomes Research and led clinically by the British Heart Rhythm Society

The full report can be accessed via the Arrhythmia Alliance website, www.heartrhythmalliance.org

Notes to Editors:

1. **To arrange an interview** with Trudie Lobban contact: nigel@heartrhythmalliance.org or call 07785 277343
2. Arrhythmia Alliance, are global advocates, working in partnership to reduce deaths and impact on individuals caused by cardiac arrhythmias and their associated morbidities. By raising awareness and campaigning for the improved detection and care of heart rhythm disorders, Arrhythmia Alliance aims to extend and improve the lives of the millions around the world that these conditions affect. Visit website www.heartrhythmalliance.org
3. The eleventh devices annual report for the National Cardiac Rhythm Management Audit presents an official record of cardiac device implants and recommendations based on these procedures performed between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016. The report includes data from 196 implanting centres in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and shows trends in the use of this therapy.
4. The National Audit of Cardiac Rhythm Management, hosted by the National Institute for Cardiovascular Outcomes Research (NICOR), manages data submitted by hospitals on patients with implanted devices or undergoing ablation for management of cardiac rhythm disorders.

Cardiac Rhythm Management (CRM) Devices

CRM devices such as pacemakers and defibrillators are used to treat dangerous heart rhythm disorders that can cause blackouts and sudden cardiac death. They are implanted under the skin and connected to the heart with a procedure that can usually be performed under local anaesthetic, taking 30mins to 2 hours.



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Cardiac pacemakers have been implanted in the UK since the early 1960s and have been identified, along with hip replacements, as the most cost effective high volume procedures provided in the NHS.

Implantable cardiac defibrillators (ICD) have been implanted in the UK since the mid-1980s. In addition to acting as pacemakers, they can deliver an automatic shock to rescue a patient from a cardiac arrest.

Cardiac resynchronisation therapy (CRT) devices have been implanted in the UK since 2000. These are implanted as a treatment for heart failure, and can be a type of pacemaker (CRT-P) or also have defibrillator capability (CRT-D).

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