

Saving time, saving lives: Calling for help early ensures cardiac patients get best treatment

22 October 2012

Experts in emergency cardiac care from around the world met in Istanbul to discuss ways to improve outcomes in patients with acute cardiac disease. This was the first annual meeting of the newly launched Acute Cardiovascular Care Association (ACCA) of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC). The congress concludes today.

"The key message is that time saves lives," said Professor Tom Quinn, United Kingdom, member of the ACCA Board. "In cardiac emergencies, such as a [heart attack](#), calling an ambulance immediately ensures the patient gets prompt [medical care](#).

Calling for help early results in early diagnosis and doctors and nurses can decide on the best treatment. Most of these treatments are highly time-dependent, so the sooner you get into the system, the better your chances of surviving. We talk about the "chain of survival" in [cardiac arrest](#). The most important part here is early recognition followed by early call for help. This applies to patients with severe [chest pain](#), sudden severe [breathlessness](#) as to those who fall unconscious." Prof Quinn chairs the session "Saving 100,000 lives after cardiac arrest" today.

Cardiologists present discussed the latest science and treatments available. Guidelines today establish clear recommendations for the way patients experiencing a heart attack should be treated. This usually ensures the organisation and implementation of so-called STEMI networks in daily practice. Nevertheless, it has not been possible to optimise the respective local situations everywhere and professionals confirmed that there is still room for improvement in the pre-hospital phase: in respecting time delays; in getting patients to the right hospital where they can receive the best treatment; in educating the public (and especially women) on the symptoms of a heart attack and in training ambulance staff and in

harmonising treatment standards, respectively.

"What we learnt from this meeting is that, despite advances in the treatment of acute [cardiac disease](#), there is still a huge need for educational sessions which take individual patients into account," said Professor Peter Clemmensen (Denmark) President of the Acute [Cardiac Care](#) Association (ACCA) of the [European Society of Cardiology](#) (ESC). "Our most popular sessions have been those where delegates can discuss complex patient cases they have faced in daily practice, with faculty."

"The big international contingent (with large delegations from India, Egypt and Russia) confirms Turkey as a meeting point between East and West and signals to us that it may be the right time to take ACCA's educational and scientific activities, which are the core of our association, beyond Europe."

"We were able to put together a programme of great scientific value," said Prof Bulent Gorenek, Scientific Programme Chairperson and Local Host. "The main theme of this year's meeting - 'Integrative Approach and Management of Acute Cardiovascular Diseases' - highlights the importance of the collaboration between different disciplines. This helped attract record numbers to our congress and as local host, I can say that the ACC Congress has brought a bigger awareness of emergency cardiac care to Turkey and this in turn should impact the management and survival of patients with heart attack."

The ACC Congress 2012 attracted 1365 participants with over 106 new members signing up during the event.

A wide range of educational activities were also available to ACCA members, including the online

version of the IACC Textbook and the new ESCeLearning platform, where ACCA will launch their first learning programme in the Spring of 2013.

"This has been a very successful congress," concluded Professor Clemmensen. "Our objective - supporting professionals involved in acute cardiac care to improve the diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes of acute cardiovascular diseases - has been met, to the benefit of both doctors and patients."

More information: Saving 100,000 lives after cardiac arrest. Topkapi Lecture Room 14:15 Monday 22 October 2012 from the ACC Congress 2012 Scientific Programme: [www.escardio.org/congresses/ac... programme-glance.pdf](http://www.escardio.org/congresses/ac...programme-glance.pdf)

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