
#ESCCongress: Vaccines Against Respiratory Infections Reduce Heart Failure Deaths



According to new findings presented at the ESC Congress 2020, influenza and pneumonia vaccinations are associated with fewer hospital deaths in heart failure patients.

Approximately 26 million people are affected with heart failure worldwide. It is estimated that one out of five individuals will develop heart failure in their lifetime. Heart failure can have a significant impact on quality of life and patients often require hospitalisation. In addition, respiratory infections such as influenza and pneumonia make heart failure worse. That is why annual vaccinations are recommended in these patients.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has shone the spotlight on the importance of vaccination to prevent respiratory infections, particularly for people with diseases like heart failure," said study author Dr. Karthik Gonuguntla of the University of Connecticut.

To date, few studies have compared outcomes of vaccinated patients versus non-vaccinated patients. This study examined if immunisations had any link with the risk of heart failure patients dying while in hospital. It included 2,912,137 patients with heart failure who had a hospital admission in 2010 to 2014. The average age of study patients was 70 years. Around 1.4% of the patients had the flu vaccine while 1.4% had the pneumonia vaccine. In-hospital death rates were compared between those who received the flu vaccine and those who received the pneumonia vaccine.

Findings of the study show that rates of in-hospital mortality were significantly lower in patients who received the flu vaccine (1.3%) compared to those who did not receive the flu vaccine (3.6%). Rates of in-hospital mortality were also significantly lower in patients inoculated against pneumonia (1.2%) compared to those who were not inoculated (3.6%).

Dr. Gonuguntla said: "Our study provides further impetus for annual immunisations in patients with heart failure. Despite advice to do so, uptake remains low. Although large administrative databases like the NIS are prone to containing some errors, the data indicate that there is some distance to go before reaching 100% coverage."

He noted that serious reactions to flu and pneumonia vaccinations are very rare, happen within a few hours, and can be effectively treated.

Dr. Gonuguntla said: "Pneumonia and flu vaccines are vital to preventing these respiratory infections and protecting patients with heart failure. Although many people have rejected common and safe vaccines before COVID-19, I am optimistic that the pandemic has changed perceptions about the role of immunisations in safeguarding our health."

Source: [ESC Congress 2020](#)

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