



Returning to work with heart failure

Dr Sue Piper, Consultant Cardiologist Kings College Hospital

Carys Barton, Heart failure Nurse Consultant, Imperial college healthcare Trust





WELCOME
BACK 😊

Objectives

- What is heart failure ?
- What is the symptom burden ?
- How is heart failure treated ?
- Devices and the impact on working
- Psychological impact - what are they thinking? What is the employer thinking ?
- Supporting people living with heart failure in the work place - (toilet breaks / Appointments / T.C.)



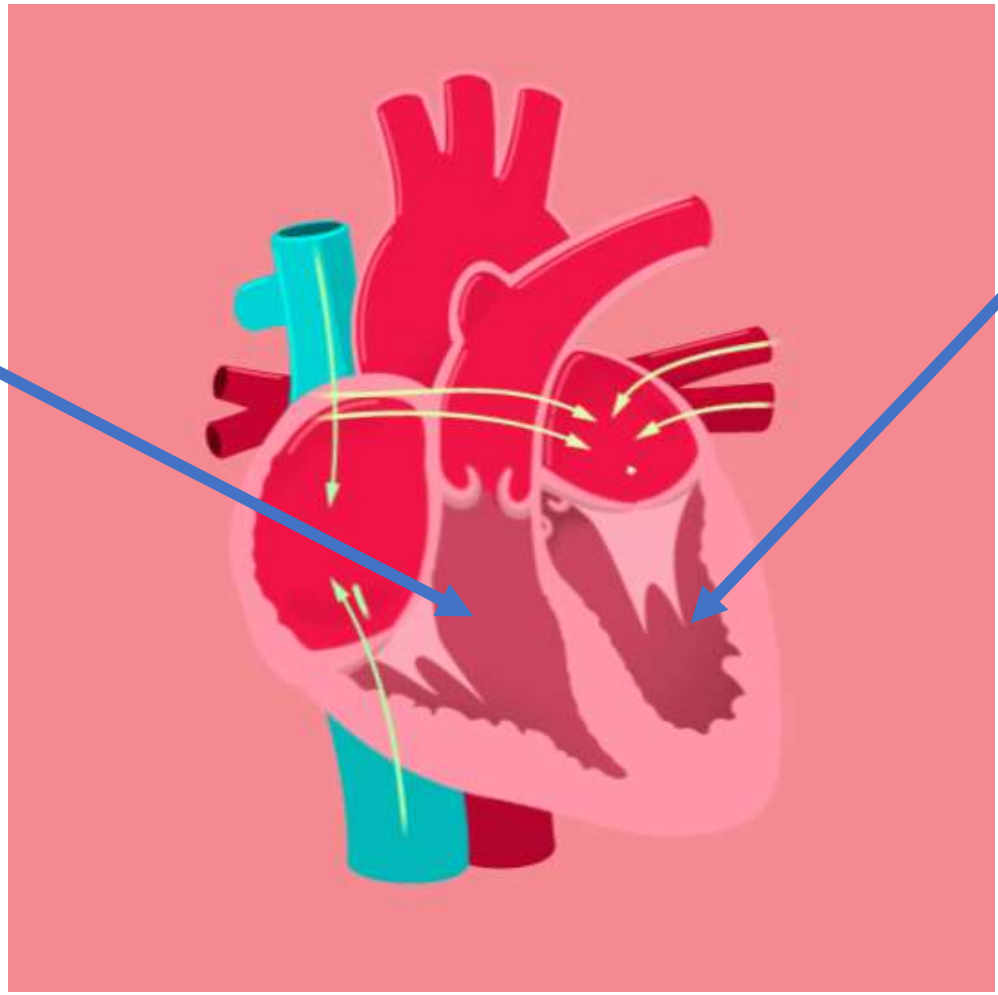
What is heart failure (HF)?

" a clinical syndrome characterised by typical symptoms that may be accompanied by signs caused by a structural and / or functional cardiac abnormality, resulting in a reduced cardiac output and / or elevated intracardiac pressures at rest or during stress "



Types of Heart Failure

Right
sided
HF



Left sided
HF

Classified by Ejection Fraction (normal >50%)

- HF with reduced EF (HFrEF) <40%
- HF with mid-range EF (HFmrEF) 40-49%



Causes



Heart attacks – ischaemic heart disease



High blood pressure



Heart valve disease



Metabolic/Hormone (e.g. thyroid disease, pregnancy)



Toxins (e.g. drugs/alcohol misuse, chemotherapy)



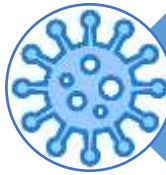
Genetic abnormalities



Infiltration – amyloid/sarcoid



Heart Rhythm – fast/slow rhythms



Infection – myocarditis



Unknown!



Common symptoms



Shortness of Breath



Swelling of feet & legs



Chronic lack of energy



Difficulty sleeping at night due to breathing problems



Swollen or tender abdomen with loss of appetite



Cough with frothy Sputum



Increased urination at night



Confusion and/or impaired memory

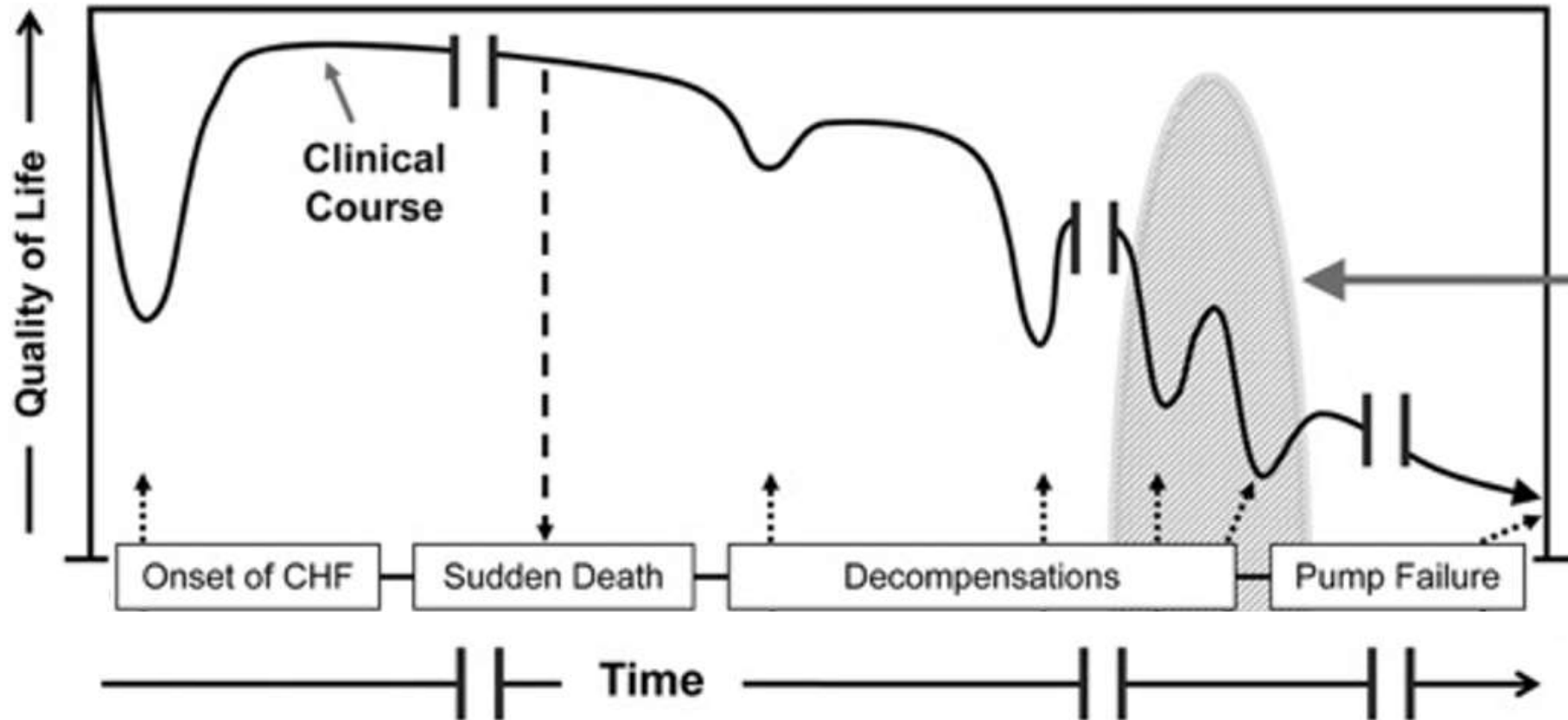


HF is a co-morbid condition





Symptom Burden



Transition to Advanced Heart Failure:

- Oral therapies failing
- A time for many major decisions
- Consider MCS and/or transplantation, if eligible
- Consider inversion of care plan to one dominated by a palliative approach, which may involve formal hospice

How this may affect work

- type of work
 - e.g. armed forces, airline pilot are ruled out
 - driving occupations can be impossible to return to in some cases (no group 2 licence if $EF < 40\%$).
 - physical labour
 - shift work
 - operating heavy machinery
- Many will require reasonable adjustments





Treatment & Management options

Treat/manage cause

Medical therapy

Device therapy

Cardiac rehabilitation classes

MCS/Transplant

Treatment aims

- ✓ R e l i e v e s i g n s
a n d s y m p t o m s
- ✓ P r e v e n t
h o s p i t a l
a d m i s s i o n
- ✓ I m p r o v e





Benefits of contemporary treatment

Comprehensive therapy = ARNI, beta blocker, MR A & SGLT2 inhibitor

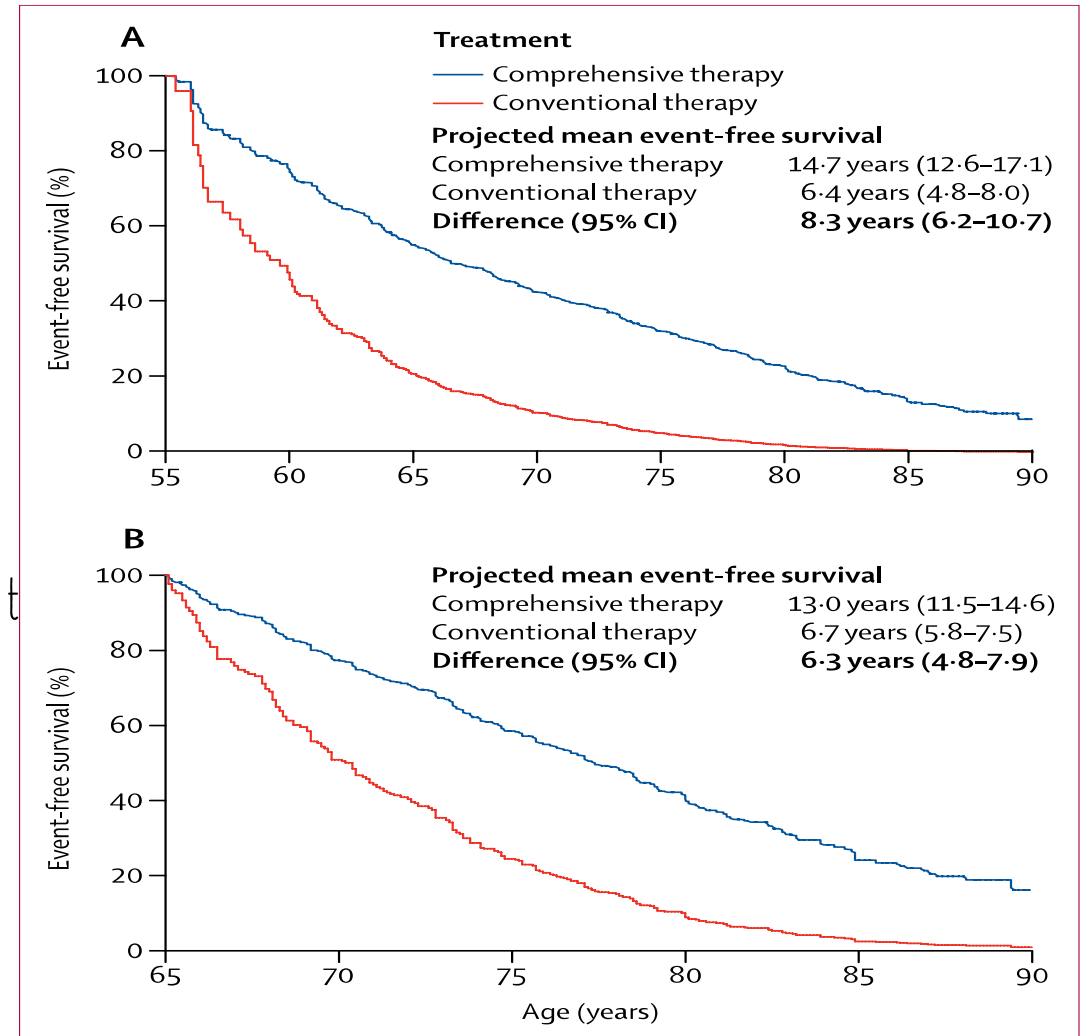
Conventional therapy = ACEi or ARB & beta blocker

Time free from cardiovascular death or first hospital admission for heart failure:

- 2.7 additional years (for an 80-year-old)
- 8.3 additional years (for a 55-year-old)

Survival

Lancet 2020; 396: 121-28





Medical Therapy and Returning to Work



- Usually a minimum of 5-6 tablets per day just for HF
- Optimisation of these medications can take 6 months - needing regular visits / blood tests
- Side effects
 - Frequent urination

Device therapy for HFrEF

ICD

(implantable cardioverter defibrillator)

- Identify and treat ventricular arrhythmias

- Reduce the risk of

CRT-P and CRT-D

(cardiac resynchronisation

- Improve symptoms / and quality of life^{1,2}

- Reduce mortality in patients with heart

1. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. Implantable cardioverter defibrillators and cardiac resynchronisation therapy for arrhythmias and heart failure. 14314. 2014. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta314/chapter/3-The-techniques> Accessed August 2018;

2. Ponikowski P et al. Eur Heart J. 2016;37(27):2200-2210.

3. Bristow MR et al. N Engl J Med. 2004;350:2140-2150.



Device therapy for HFrEF

ICD

- EF < 35% despite optimum medical therapy
- No specific ECG
- NYHA I-III
- Most evidence in

patients with IH D

CR T-P and CR T-D

- EF < 35% despite optimum medical therapy
- LBBB > 130ms
- NYHA II-IV
- Any aetiology of HF

with LBBB

- Combine with ICD

1. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. Implantable cardioverter defibrillators and cardiac resynchronisation therapy for arrhythmias and heart failure. TA314. 2014. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta314/chapter/3-The-technologies> Accessed August 2018;

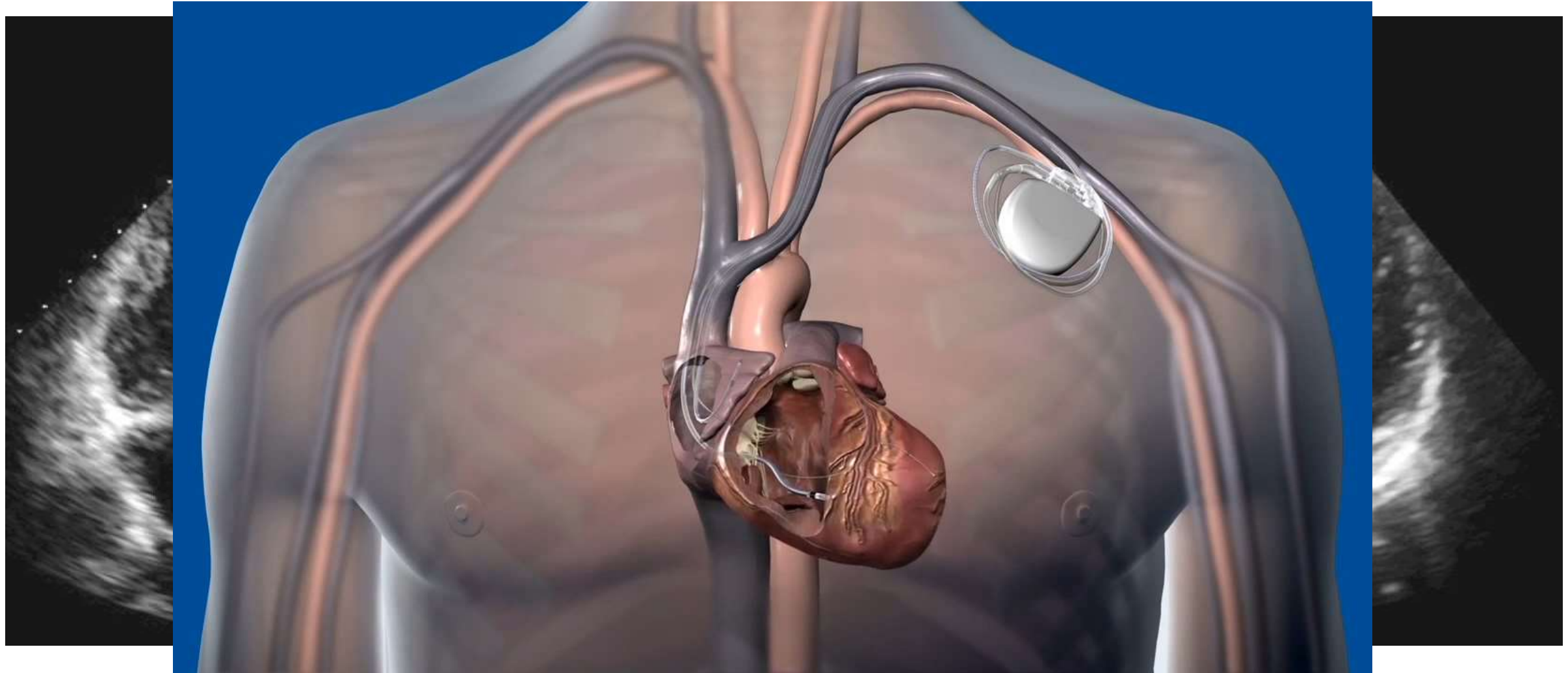
2. Ponikowski P et al. Eur Heart J 2016;37:2129-2200; 3.

3. Bristow MR et al. N Engl J Med 2004;350:2140-2150.

Prevents sudden



Cardiac resynchronisation therapy





Returning to work with an ICD

- Electromagnetic fields
- Driving
 - Ineligible for public carriage licence/group 2 licence forever
 - At implant - ban for one month if for prevention, six if for previous arrhythmia/cardiac arrest
- Mobiles/cordless phones
- Arc welding
- Post implant care
- Contact/physical work (e.g. security staff)
- Emotional/Psychological impact



Psychological impact

What are they
thinking?







Often the first
thought is "Am I
going to die?"



Failure

failure [feɪl-yər] [SHOW IPA](#)  

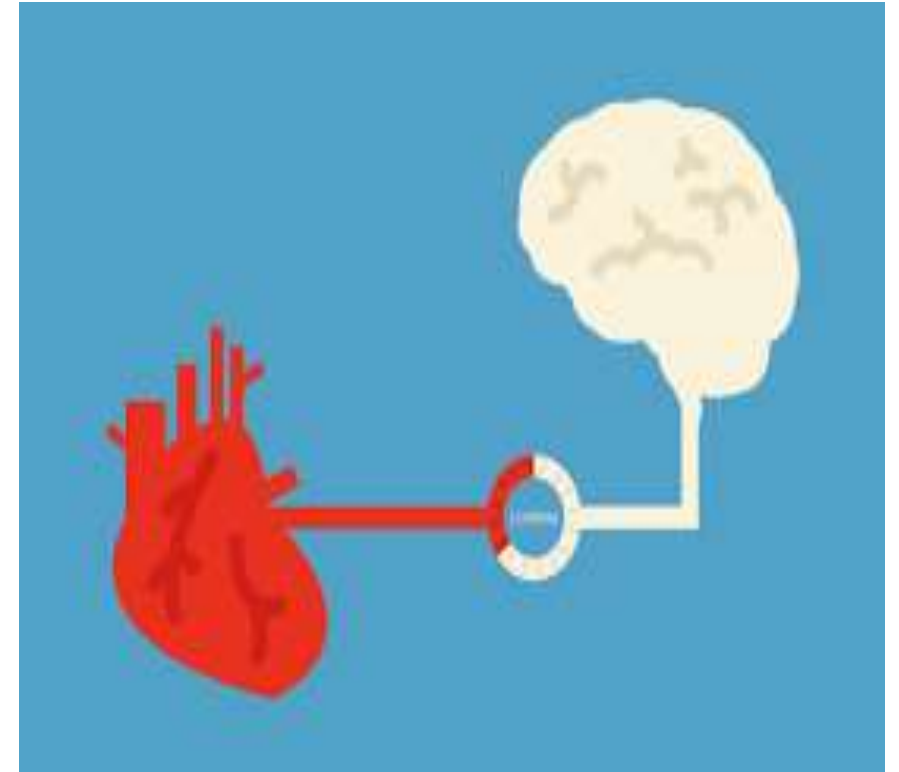
See synonyms for: **failure** / **failures** on [Thesaurus.com](#)

noun

- 1 an act or instance of **failing** or proving unsuccessful; lack of success:
His effort ended in failure. The campaign was a failure.
- 2 nonperformance of something due, required, or expected:
a failure to do what one has promised; a failure to appear.
- 3 a subnormal quantity or quality; an insufficiency:
the failure of crops.
- 4 deterioration or decay, especially of vigor, strength, etc.:
The failure of her health made retirement necessary.
- 5 a condition of being bankrupt by reason of insolvency.

Emotions of being diagnosed with heart failure

- It messes with your head.
- It robs you of your confidence, you withdraw into yourself.
- It changes your values.
- It means you can no longer plan even simple things, like trips or holidays.
- It forces you to re-evaluate your goals and ambitions.
- You can become obsessed with the condition.
- You worry so much you forget to live. You become scared of the unknown.
- You avoid making memories.
- You grieve for your former life, career and relationships.
- You realise you are now different; you are no longer seen as normal.





Failure used in the workplace is not a term anyone wants !



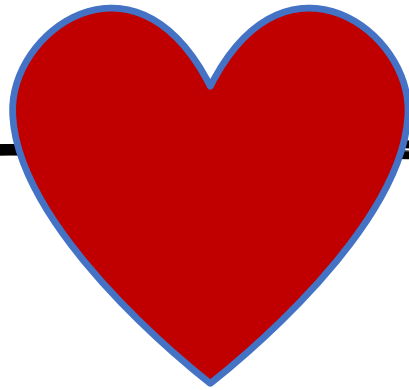
What is the employer thinking?

- Fear !
- Is the person at risk of death ?
- What can we do to ensure the person is safe?
- What can we do to ensure we as an employer are safe ?
- What is the legislation ?



Having to go to work

- People with heart failure look the same as everyone else- they are often not afforded the same concessions
- Travelling to work- standing on tube/train/bus can be challenging
- No free prescriptions- costly medications to pay for
- Financial implications of not working can be devastating- social care is not afforded in the same way as with cancer due to poor knowledge and understanding
- The Equality Act 2010 protects people in England, Wales and Scotland with a disability at work. 'Disability' includes a physical impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to perform normal day-to-day activities
- Make sure occupational health department or human resources experts are involved. Recommendations from occupational health advisers can include reducing driving, changing shift patterns, ensuring time off for medical appointments and changing heavy manual work to something lighter
- Support from GP, HFSN and Cardiologist



*People can and do live well with
heart failure*



What does this mean in the workplace?

Risk assessments should take place according to individual symptom burden– physical ability

Others in workplace may need to know about condition/what to do if unwell (ICD shock)

During pandemic/other times can the person work from home?

Various interventions require different times off work– someone with HF may have several interventions

Frequent urination is the most common side effect –Ensure regular toilet breaks are allowed and desks near toilets

Allow for regular rest breaks– ensure they are taken

Retraining may be required

If working on an area that cannot be left easily for toilet breaks i.e. supermarket checkout offer alternative workspace



How ?

- Individualised care - HF affects people differently, it is not about the numbers
- Early diagnosis and access to therapies - people live well and for longer
- Cardiac rehabilitation- if it were a pill it would be the cheapest most effective !
- Increasing therapies to treat- new innovations
- Supportive employers, occupational health and wellbeing



You can seek advice

- [British Society for Heart Failure - Help us make heart failure a national priority \(bshf.org.uk\)](http://bshf.org.uk)
- [Heart Failure Foundation - Heart Failure Information for Patients \(pumpingmarvellous.org\)](http://pumpingmarvellous.org)
- [Home | Alliance for Heart Failure](#)
- [Homepage - Cardiomyopathy UK](#)
- [British Heart Foundation - Beat heartbreak forever \(bhf.org.uk\)](http://bhf.org.uk)
- P e r s o n ' s G P , C a r d i o l o g i s t a n d H e a r t F a i l u r e S p e c i a l i s t N u r s e
w i t h t h e i r p e r m i s s i o n



The F Word

The F Word

FREEDOM from Heart Failure symptoms:

- 🏠 Fighting for breath
- 🏠 Fatigue
- 🏠 Filling with Fluid

If you recognise any of these symptoms in yourself or someone close to you, please seek medical help



Campaign

BSH led heart failure awareness campaign with multi-stakeholder support to improving public health and quality of life for people with heart failure as a long term, life limiting condition.

Making heart failure a national priority and treated with a similar urgency to cancer.

We collectively need to educate the **public** to recognise the symptoms, whether their own, a family member or that elderly neighbour to seek help and get on treatment early to be able to live well, live longer and stay out of hospital.

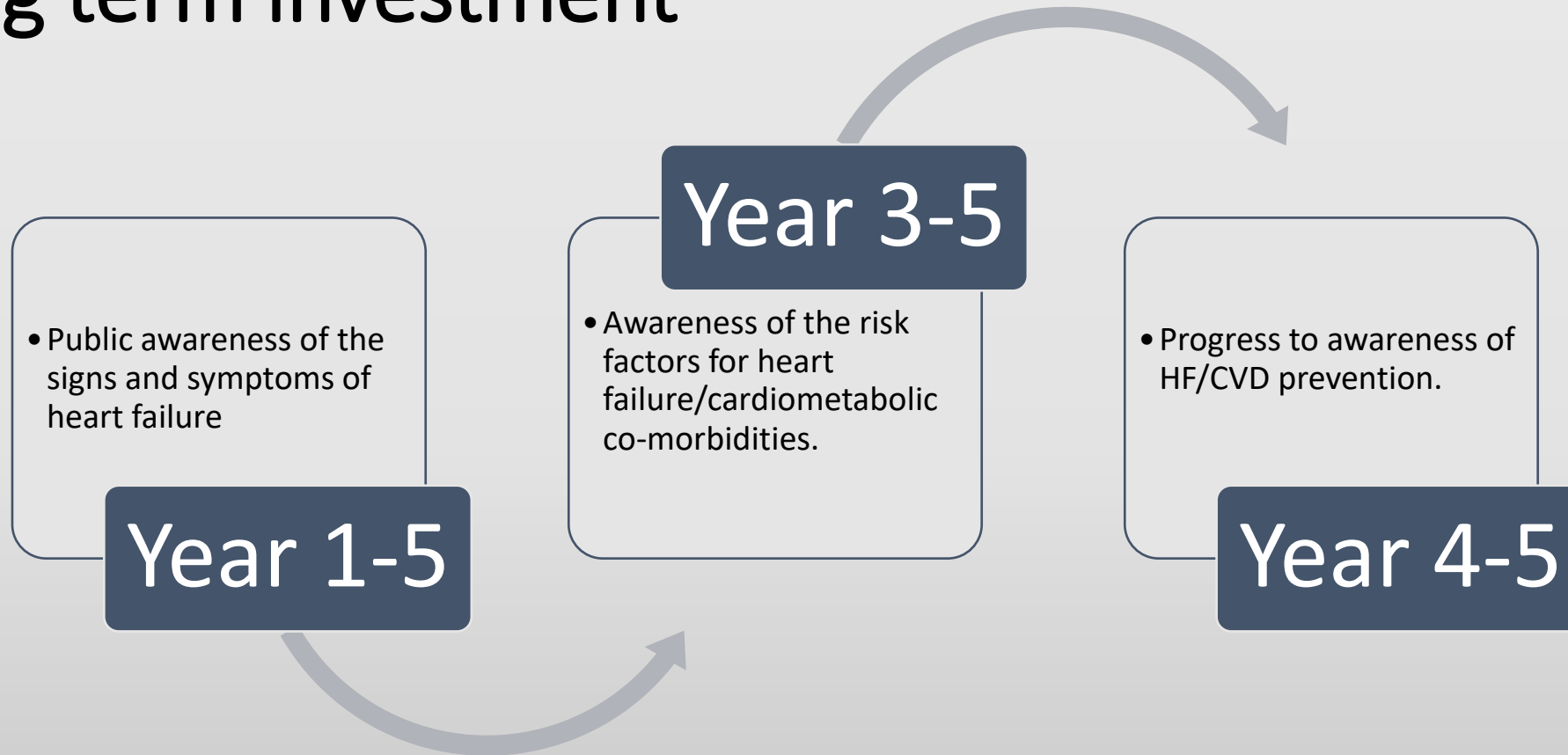
This is a movement to embed heart failure as a serious but treatable long-term condition into the fabric public understanding, including **policymakers** and healthcare systems.

Public - identification of heart failure symptoms and early diagnosis and treatment

Policymakers - identification of one of the biggest societal health problems in UK today



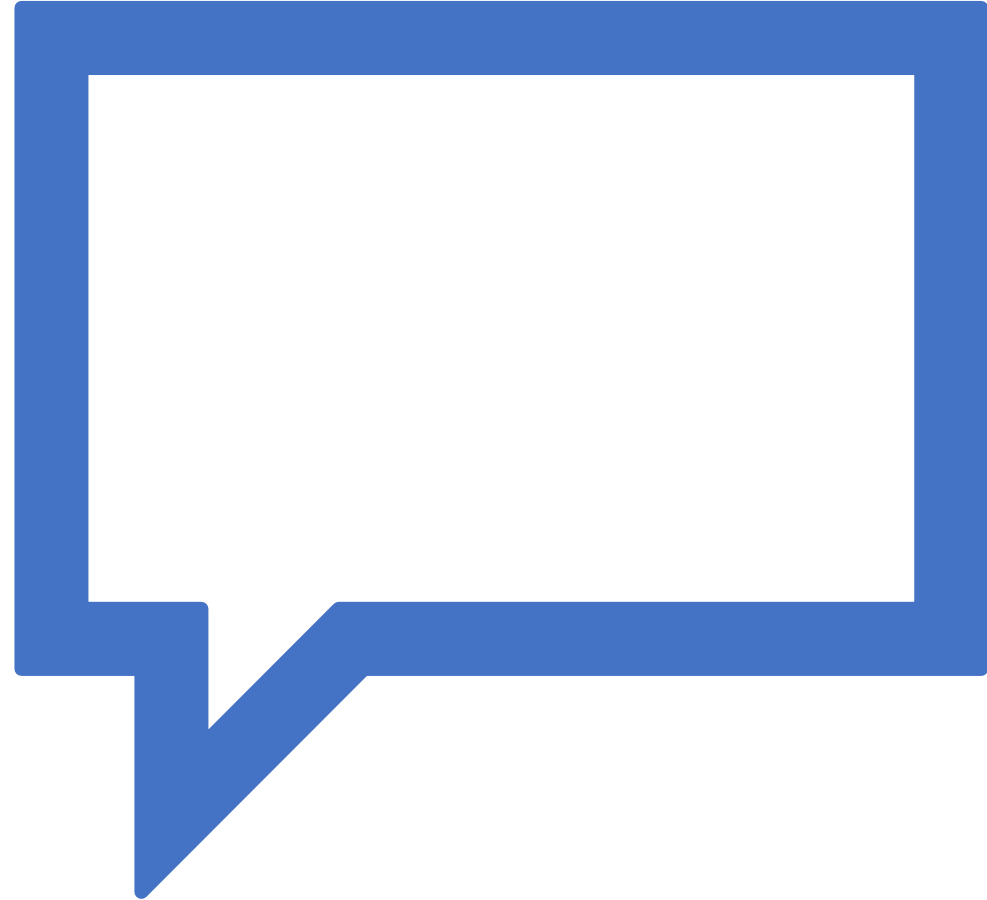
Long term investment



Heart failure is one of the biggest success stories in modern medicine today. We can do so much to improve people's lives giving hope and freedom for them to live their lives to the fullest. We can take the fear out of heart failure.



*Don't listen
to us listen
to the people
that live
with this*







Thank you for
listening and
questions?

