



THE HEART FAILURE ASSOCIATION DECLARATION

A CALL FOR ACTION

Agreed at the

5th National Heart Failure Societies Presidents Summit

Ljubljana, Slovenia
24 October 2015

The 5th National Heart Failure Societies' Presidents' Summit discussed and unanimously adopted a Call For Action in support of the Heart Failure Association's (HFA) of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) Global Heart Failure Awareness Programme. The Summit, attended by 36 National Heart Failure Societies and the board of the HFA/ESC, recognised the urgent need for action to improve patient outcomes dramatically and reduce the burden of heart failure on society and health systems.

The Global Burden of Heart Failure

New and recent advances in diagnosis and treatments mean that heart failure is preventable. Most patients with heart failure can be treated more effectively, improving their quality of life and chances of survival.

Cardiovascular disease remains the number one cause of mortality in the world, accounting for more than 7.4 million deaths per annum, of which heart failure alone affects some 26 million people worldwide. The incidence of heart failure is predicted to grow dramatically over the next 20-30 years, due to poor control of cardiovascular risk factors, ageing populations, better survival rates of heart attacks and other acute cardiovascular diseases, as well as the rise in serious co-morbidities such as hypertension and diabetes.

Heart failure carries a huge economic burden for societies, healthcare systems and for the individual patient. Patients are usually diagnosed late, and therefore treated in the acute phase or at late stage

disease, when hospitalisation is inevitable. Heart failure accounts for 1-3% of total healthcare expenditure in the developed world: a staggering €2.9billion in Germany, and in the US nearly \$21billion per annum.

The burden of heart failure:

- Heart failure is a complex syndrome, and can arise due to many underlying problems affecting the structure and the functioning of the heart
- In economically developed countries >1 in 5 people are expected to develop heart failure at some point in their life
- Despite improvements in care over the past 20 years, the outlook for patients with heart failure remains poor, and survival rates are worse than those for bowel, breast or prostate cancer
- Admissions to hospital due to heart failure are rapidly growing. Globally, 17-45% of patients admitted to hospital with heart failure will die within 1 year, and the majority will die within 5 years

A Call For Action

The HFA, the world's largest heart failure organisation, and its National Societies joined forces to recommend united action, and declared that they believed that the global burden of heart failure is huge, and cannot be allowed to continue unchallenged. Preventing heart failure must become a strategic health priority for each and every country.

The 6 priority actions to address global heart failure prevention are:

- **Raise global awareness** about heart failure and make it universal health priority
- **Promote prevention** by encouraging healthy lifestyles: exercise, diet, blood pressure control
- **Train health care professionals in order to achieve** earlier diagnosis and earlier intervention, a key strategy for improved management, *and to form multidisciplinary teams in long-term follow-up*
- **Expand the specialisation of heart failure amongst cardiologists and nurses** and educate them about the complexity of the syndrome and its causal relationship with other conditions
- **Clarify and optimise the patient pathway** thereby improving earlier detection at primary care level and structured follow-up implementation
- **Support strategic and political initiatives** to improve heart failure care at national level

The Global Heart Failure Awareness Programme

The HFA will launch the Global Heart Failure Awareness Programme – a global initiative – that will begin in 2016 and meet its 3-year objectives by the end of 2019.

This broad awareness campaign, aimed at all stakeholders in the heart failure community, will drive better understanding and recognition of the condition on the one hand, and improve and align intervention strategies on the other. The campaign seeks to implement initiatives targeted at specific stakeholder groups, as well as more broad-based public awareness campaigns via media to reach and educate the community at large. It will promote the establishment of Centres of Excellence in Heart Failure and the transfer of best practice amongst countries in order to accelerate change and encourage the adoption of good strategies.

The campaign will engage with:

- The public
- Patients, their families and carers
- Physicians, clinicians, both at primary care level as well as specialists across the disease spectrum
- Nurses
- Politicians and public health professionals
- Regulators and legislators

The 5th National Heart Failure Societies' Presidents' Summit, by adopting this Declaration, wishes to encourage member organisations and HFA/ESC to develop and implement this call for action and launch and execute the Global Heart Failure Awareness Programme.

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Slovenian Society of Cardiology HF WG
Professor Mitja Lainscak

Swiss Society of Cardiology HF WG
Professor Thomas Suter

National Societies and Working Groups

Austrian Society of Cardiology HF WG
Assistant Professor Deddo Moertl

British Society for Heart Failure
Professor Andrew L Clark

Danish Society of Cardiology HF WG
Dr Brian Logstrup

French Society of Cardiology HF WG
Dr Pascal de Groote

Hungarian Society of Cardiology HF WG
Associate Professor Noemi Nyolczas

Kazakhstan Association of Cardiologists HF WG
Dr Amina Rakisheva

Lithuanian Society of Cardiology HF WG
Associate Professor Jelena Celutkiene

Netherlands Society of Cardiology HF WG
Professor Rudolf de Boer

Portuguese Society of Cardiology HF WG
Professor Candida Fonseca

Serbian Society of Cardiology HF WG
Professor Petar Seferovic

Spanish Society of Cardiology HF WG
Associate Professor Marisa Crespo Leiro

Turkish Society of Cardiology HF WG
Professor Mehmet Birhan Yilmaz

Heart Failure Association of Belarus
Associate Professor Alena Kurlianskaya

Croatian Society of Cardiology HF WG
Professor Davor Milicic

Egypt Society of Cardiology HF WG
Dr Mahmoud Hassanein

German Cardiac Society HF WG
Professor Stefan Störk

Israeli Working Group on Heart Failure
Dr Israel Gotsman

Latvian Society of Cardiology HF WG
Dr Ginta Kamzola

Macedonian Society of Cardiology HF WG
Professor Silvana Jovanova

Norwegian Society of Cardiology HF WG
Associate Professor Rune Mo

Romanian Society of Cardiology HF WG
Dr Ruxandra Maria Christodorescu

Slovak Society of Cardiology HF WG
Associate Professor Eva Goncalvesova

Swedish Society of Cardiology HF WG
Assistant Professor Bernt Gerhard Wikstrom

Ukrainian Society of Cardiology HF WG
Dr Irina Mazur