
NEW WHO POCKET-CHARTS WILL SAVE LIVES BY PREDICTING HEART ATTACK AND STROKE

September 2007, Geneva – A new book of pocket-charts that will help health workers to identify people at risk of heart attacks and strokes and save lives by prescribing the most appropriate treatment is published today by the World Health Organization (WHO). The charts can be adapted for use in any setting, in any country, with any patient.

The “Pocket Guidelines for Assessment and Management of Cardiovascular Risk” can be carried and used by any health care worker and is available in six languages. The guide contains easy-to-use charts that can predict the risk of a heart attack or a stroke and could help health workers to save and improve the lives of people in all countries.

“This is a real breakthrough. Now, health care workers everywhere – whether they are in a high-tech medical center in a big city, or riding a bicycle to visit patients in the countryside – can use a simple assessment and treatment tool to prevent heart attacks and strokes,” said the WHO Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan. “Primary health care workers now have a new tool to assess and manage people at risk of heart attacks and strokes. This brings cardiovascular care to the places and people who need it most.”

This is the first cardiovascular disease risk-prediction system that can be used worldwide and is also specially designed for use with people everywhere, including in low-resource settings. It is an important innovation that will help health workers to target limited health care resources at people who are at higher risk of developing heart attacks and strokes.

These guidelines will be distributed to health workers in the form of pocket guides that have been produced for each of the WHO regions (risk profiles are different for different parts of the world). The pocket guides are available in hard copy and on the WHO website http://www.who.int/cardiovascular_diseases/resources/publications/en/index.html

“We are never prepared for the sudden death of a family member or a friend from a heart attack or stroke”, said Dr Catherine Le Galès-Camus, WHO Assistant Director-General for Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health. “Cardiovascular diseases are increasing towards epidemic proportions in deve-

loping countries – they already account for one-third of global deaths, and almost 10 percent of the global burden of disease, and are likely to become the developing world’s leading cause of death in 2010. There is reason for hope, however, given that huge potential exists to control this emerging epidemic. These risk charts are a major new tool for providing the best health care to all the world’s people”.

To ensure that the pocket guide gets into the hands of the health care workers who should use it, WHO will be collaborating with national Ministries of Health and health-focused nongovernmental organizations to organize ‘training of trainers’ workshops and distribution of the pocket guide.

The risk-prediction charts integrate the following risk factors when predicting the risk of a heart attack or stroke in the 10 year period following the patient assessment:

Age, Sex, Tobacco use, Blood pressure, Diabetes status, Blood cholesterol.

The pocket guide also incorporates management recommendations, based on the risk of developing heart attacks and strokes, in the following areas:

Smoking cessation, Dietary changes, Physical activity, Weight control, Alcohol intake, Antihypertensive drugs, Lipid lowering drugs, Hypoglycaemic drugs, Antiplatelet drugs, Anticoagulant treatment, Revascularization surgery, Drugs that are not recommended.

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