

AF Association Healthcare Pioneers Showcasing best practice in Atrial Fibrillation 2020

Atrial fibrillation (AF) is an arrhythmia which remains one of the major causes of **stroke**, heart failure, sudden death, and cardiovascular morbidity in the world.¹ The NHS Long Term Plan includes a major ambition to prevent 150,000 strokes, heart attacks and dementia cases over the next 10 years.²

Improving the **detection** and **treatment** of AF is key in the prevention of AF-related strokes.

The Atrial Fibrillation Association is a registered charity* which focuses on raising awareness of AF by providing information, support, awareness and educational materials for patients and medical professionals involved in detecting, diagnosing and managing AF. The organisation works closely with medical professionals, Department of Health, government, NHS Trusts, strategic health authorities, patients, carers, patient support group members and allied groups.³

Every year, the charity publishes the **AF Association Healthcare Pioneers Report**,[†] showcasing best practice case studies in delivering care for AF patients from **identification**, **diagnosis** through to **treatment**. The 2020 report received over 30 entries from the UK and abroad.⁴ The 17 winners were announced during the AF Association Global AF Aware (18-24 November) annual event hosted at the Palace of Westminster, London. Here are two outstanding winners from this year's report.⁴

To find out more about the initiatives above and the other UK regional winners, please download the full report from the AF Association website here: <http://www.hearhythmalliance.org/afa/uk/healthcare-pioneers-2020>

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ADVANCING AF DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT: A 'system-wide' collaboration to reduce incidence of AF-related stroke East Midlands Academic Health Science Network (AHSN), UK

A partnership for the AHSN with key stakeholders: Public Health England, Health Education England, NHS RightCare, British Heart Foundation, the Stroke Association and the Arrhythmia Alliance. The multi-faceted AF Advance programme involved **AF ambassadors** (within CCGs and GP practices to drive improvement), **diagnosis** (improve clinical expertise via clinical upskilling and deployment of mobile ECG devices), **variation** (infographics were developed to display the variation in diagnosis and management at CCG level) and more. The programme delivered the following:



Improvement in diagnostic rate: from **76%** in March 2017, to **81%** in March 2018 – an additional **5665 patients diagnosed**



Each of the five lowest performing CCGs increased their anticoagulation rate by **8-10%**



In total, it is estimated that this will prevent approximately **167 strokes, 56 deaths** and secure health and cost efficiencies of **£3.45million/year**⁴



QUALITY-OF-LIFE IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE FOR AF PATIENTS: An exercise-based cardiac rehabilitation programme Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, UK

AF patients were invited to join an exercise-based rehabilitation programme to help manage their condition. The effects of the intervention were examined on exercise capacity, weight and psychological health. Results showed that out of 77 patients who were invited to join the programme:



43% completed the exercise programme



There was a **15%** improvement in the six-minute walk test



Reduced short-term **anxiety** and **depression** levels⁴

References: 1. 2016 ESC Guidelines for the management of atrial fibrillation developed in collaboration with EACTS. The Task Force for the management of atrial fibrillation of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC). *Eur Heart J*. 2016;37:2893-962; 2. NHS. The NHS Long Term Plan – a summary. Available: <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/the-nhs-long-term-plan-summary.pdf>. Accessed February 2020; 3. AF Association. AF Association Aims. Available: <https://www.hearhythmalliance.org/afa/uk/mission>. Accessed February 2020; 4. AF Association. AF Association Healthcare Pioneers Report. Showcasing Best Practice in AF in 2020. Available: <https://www.hearhythmalliance.org/afa/uk/healthcare-pioneers-2020>. Accessed February 2020.