

Promoting better understanding, diagnosis, treatment and quality of life for individuals suffering with cardiac arrhythmia

For immediate release: Tuesday 5 March 2013

UK still 'sick man of Europe' on heart devices – Arrhythmia Alliance

The leading heart rhythm charity, Arrhythmia Alliance, today welcomed the publication of the Cardiovascular Disease Outcomes Strategy but said that the UK was still the 'sick man of Europe', lagging far behind other European countries on providing patients with life-saving ICD treatments.

Arrhythmia Alliance Chief Executive, Trudie Lobban MBE, commented:

"We welcome the publication of today's Cardiovascular Disease Outcomes Strategy in particular the focus on tackling sudden cardiac death and the provision of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in the community. We have made advances in recent years on tackling vascular heart attacks but the same level of progress has not been made in tackling problems with the electrical wiring of the heart which leads to around 100,000 deaths a year. AEDs save lives and we have repeatedly raised concerns that there is no national registry. We will now aim to work with the NHS Commissioning Board to ensure that the people have access to AEDs in the event of a cardiac arrest.

"However, today's strategy does not go far enough in tackling deaths from sudden cardiac arrest. Many of those that die would have been saved by a simple ICD (implantable cardioverter-defibrillator). The UK is still the sick man of Europe in providing life saving devices. Latest research shows that the UK is lagging third from the bottom in a table of Western European ICD use with the UK implanting 70 life saving devices per million people, while Germany implants 200 per million. There is also a wide variation in ICD use across the UK; with patients in North London twice as likely to receive an implant (113 per million) than those in Lancashire and Cumbria (42 per million).

"The UK's record for providing life saving device implants is intolerably low when compared with the rest of Europe. We are committed to working to ensure that people have access to life saving ICD treatments regardless of where they live."

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Notes

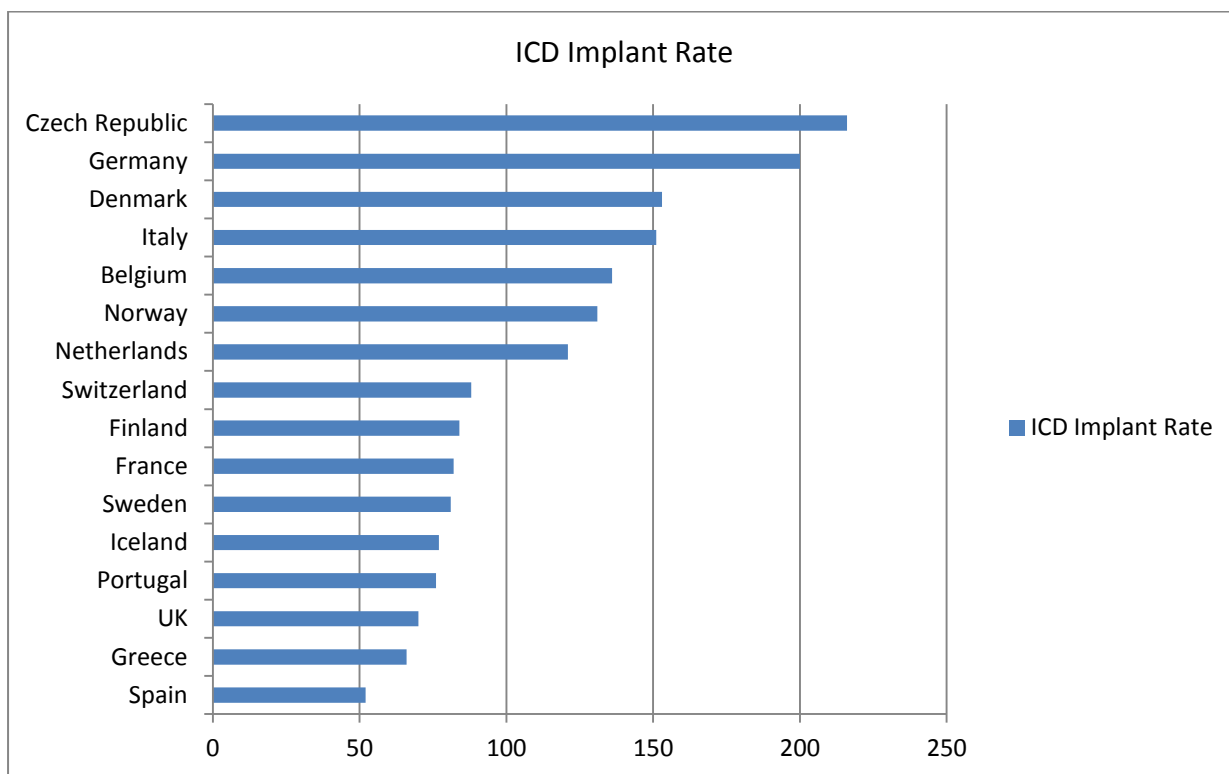
1. For more information or for interviews contact Neil Gadhok or Victoria Parker on 020 7824 1854 / neil@insightpa.com or victoria@insightpa.com . For out of hours, contact Neil Gadhok on 07966 977 576.

President: Prof A. John Camm, QHP, MD, FRCP, FACC. **Trustees:** Professor Richard Schilling M.R.C.P., MD, FRCP, FESC, Mr Mark Bullock, Mr Nigel Farrell LLB (Hons), Dr Adam P Fitzpatrick, MD, FRCP, FACC, Mrs Trudie Lobban MBE.
Patrons: W B Beaumont, OBE, Rt. Hon Tony Blair, Prof Silvia G Priori, Prof Hein JJ Wellens

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2. Arrhythmia Alliance is a coalition of patients, charities, professional medical organisations and industry groups that works to promote the timely diagnosis and effective management of arrhythmias. By raising awareness and campaigning for the improved detection and care of heart rhythm disorders, Arrhythmia Alliance aims to extend and improve the lives of the millions around the world that these conditions affect.
3. The latest Cardiac Rhythm Management UK National Clinical Audit covers the period January – December 2011; it can be found here: www.devicesurvey.com
4. The Arrhythmia Alliance website can be found at www.heartrhythmcharity.org.uk
5. Graph showing the UK's position in Western European ranking of ICD implantation rates (adapted from Cardiac Rhythm Management UK National Clinical Audit)

ICD Implant Rate 2011 – per million population



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