



Press Release

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Jim Jefferies kicks off trial to tackle heart disease

Tynecastle legend Jim Jefferies has teamed up with the cardiologist who helped save his life to support a new research study that aims to prevent heart attacks.

The former Hearts coach had a heart attack on the golf course in East Lothian last September and was treated at Royal Infirmary Edinburgh by Professor David Newby.

Professor Newby is launching a new study - called SCOT-HEART 2 – that seeks to recruit 6,000 people aged between 40-70 years old who are at increased risk from coronary heart disease. Researchers will compare two different ways of preventing heart problems to determine which is most effective.

Hearts and Hibernian Football Clubs will promote the scheme and encourage their fans to enrol as part of the University of Edinburgh study. Footballing greats Gary Locke and Pat Stanton joined Jim Jefferies and Professor Newby for a launch event at Tynecastle stadium (link to photos below).

At the moment, doctors use what is known as a 'risk score' to help decide who needs advice and medication to prevent heart attacks.

Risk scores are based on factors such as age, smoking habits and whether coronary heart disease runs in the family. However, these scores are not always accurate, leading to some patients receiving unnecessary medication and others missing out on vital drugs.

The study, funded by the British Heart Foundation, will compare the use of risks scores with CT scans – a type of x-ray that gives a detailed 3D picture of your heart and its blood vessels. The comparison with risk scores will help find out if making decisions based on a CT scan will stop too many people being given medicines they don't really need, and if it lowers the number of people having heart attacks.

Previous research by the team has found that receiving a CT scan changed the way patients with symptoms of coronary heart disease were diagnosed and treated.

Potential participants of the SCOT-HEART 2 trial will undergo an assessment to see if they are suitable to be part of the study. If eligible, they will be randomly assigned to either a risk score or CT scan group. The CT scans will take place at the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh.

The research team will use the results to advise participants and their GP about whether a change in lifestyle is needed or if medications to prevent coronary heart disease should be prescribed. People who would like to take part can register their interest by visiting the study website: <https://edin.ac/scotheart2>

Professor David Newby, lead researcher and BHF Duke of Edinburgh Chair of Cardiology, University of Edinburgh, said: "There are 10,000 hospital admissions a year in Scotland for people with heart attacks. We are hoping our research will help reduce this number and also the number of people taking unnecessary medications."

Jim Jefferies said: "When I had my heart attack, I was glad of the treatment that I received from Professor Newby and his team. The live-saving methods they used were based on years of research, which has reduced the number of deaths from heart attacks. I think any research we can do to bring these numbers down even further is a good thing and would encourage people to sign up for this clinical trial."



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James Jopling, Head of BHF Scotland, said: “Every 50 minutes in Scotland, someone is admitted to hospital due to a heart attack. Just 50 years ago, more than 7 in 10 heart attacks in the UK were fatal but today thanks to huge advances in diagnosis, treatment and care – many of them made possible by research funded by the BHF – at least 7 out of 10 people survive.

“We want to do more and have ambitions to see survival rates rise even further over the next decade. That’s why projects like the SCOT-HEART 2, led by Professor David Newby and his team at the University of Edinburgh, are so important and we look forward to seeing the results in due course.”

Photos including caption sheet can be accessed here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6lmj5ko6u9iq1a0/AACaOo1Rw5bPdSNV06TEPF5ja?dl=0>

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