

ResearchOne Data Service, 2015/16 – YHAHSN-Funded Projects

Lay Abstract

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Exploring inequalities in medication prescription patterns and outcomes among patients with myocardial infarction

Or

Understanding the importance of heart attack medications

Heart attacks are common in the UK. Nowadays, the chances of surviving a heart attack are excellent. However, this is only the case if all medications for the treatment of heart attacks are provided.

The treatment for heart attacks involves a range of medications in hospital. They are continued for a period of time after being discharged from hospital. Sometimes they are stopped after leaving hospital, which could lower the chance of survival.

Our research team has previously studied information from the national heart attack register in the UK. We found that patients have worse outcomes if they did not receive all the recommended heart attack treatments and medications in hospital. However, our work did not study the effect of stopping medications after leaving hospital.

The heart attack register contains lots of information such as the type of heart attack, the treatments and medications given in the ambulance and in hospital and how quickly those treatments were given. However, it does not contain information about GP visits after leaving hospital. This information is very important as the recommended care for a heart attack includes medications to be prescribed by the GP after the patient leaves hospital.

This project will use information from a national database on GP visits. This information will be used to look at prescription patterns, how many patients stop medications early and the factors associated with prescription patterns and medication interruption (e.g. age, sex, socio-economic status and comorbidities). It will also look at the effect, if any, of stopping medications early on patient outcomes.

None of the information held by the research team will identify individuals.

The results from this project will be directly fed back to the doctors and nurses who treat patients with heart attacks as well as the patients themselves. It will benefit patients by improving their understanding of why it is important to continue to take medications. Ultimately, we hope this study will improve survival from heart attacks.