

Report key messages	
Project title: <i>National Heart Failure Audit (NHFA)</i>	
Report ref. and name: <i>National Heart Failure Audit (NHFA) 2021 Summary Report (2019/20 data)</i>	
Date of publication: 14th October 2021	
Key message 1:	There is a downward trend in the percentage receiving an echocardiogram, the gold standard diagnostic test, now at 86% down from 92% in 2014/15. There is considerable variation in the use of this essential diagnostic tool across institutions, leaving room for improvement as only 60% of hospitals achieve the benchmark of $\geq 90\%$ having an echocardiogram. This is significantly worse for older people as only 54% of those ≥ 75 years receive one.
Key message 2:	Fewer than 50% of patients with systolic dysfunction are discharged on the three key disease modifying drugs that reduce mortality. Worryingly, the inflexion point for reduction in these drugs is in the 55-64 age group, a relatively young age, despite proven safety and efficacy of these drugs in older people. Both are areas for targeting better practice in the next few years.
Key message 3:	There is a disparity in the care of the elderly compared to younger individuals. With increasing age the audit shows that fewer receive an echo, the gold standard diagnostic test, and a gradual decline in those leaving hospital on all three key disease modifying drugs, fewer are seen by specialists and fewer are admitted to cardiology wards.
Key message 4:	Cardiac rehabilitation is too low at 15% (22% for those on a cardiology ward). A significant investment is needed if hospitals in England are to reach the NHS CVD goal of 85% of those eligible accessing care. Fresh approaches for delivering access to cardiac rehabilitation need to be considered.
Key message 5:	A unifying theme to address all these points would be early and continuing involvement of the specialist team as first outlined in the NICE guidance of 2014.
100 word summary or abstract of the report:	
This audit reports that patient mortality, whether pre- or post-discharge, is highly dependent upon three hospital characteristics:	

- Patient care under the cardiology team;
- Patients with reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF) being discharged on all three disease-modifying drugs; and
- Patients having specialist cardiology follow-up.

Achievements made in the 2019/20 cycle, despite the end of the audit year being affected by the first wave of COVID-19 include:

- A 10% improvement in the number of hospitals achieving the 90% or greater prescription of beta-blockers for HFrEF patients.
- An increase by 4% in the percentage of hospitals providing specialist care to 80% or more of patients.