

SERVICE FRAMEWORK FOR CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Appendix 2: Glossary of Terms

Angina	Heaviness or tightness in the centre of the chest, which may spread to the arms, neck, jaw, back or stomach. Angina is caused when the arteries become so narrow due to atheroma that not enough oxygen-rich blood can reach the heart muscle when the body is making high demands on it such as during exercise. The pain can also occur when a person is resting.
Angiogram	An x-ray picture of the blood vessels which shows whether the arteries are narrowed and, if so, how narrow they have become. A fine, flexible, hollow, plastic tube called a catheter is passed into an artery either in the groin or arm and is gently guided through the blood vessels. X-ray films are taken by putting a dye down the catheter and then taking a series of pictures. This means that a 'road map' of the blood vessels can be drawn showing where blood vessels are narrowed and how narrow they have become. This procedure can also be used to examine the coronary arteries (coronary angiogram) or other arteries in the body.
Angiography	A test to show whether arteries are narrowed and how narrow they have become. See 'angiogram' for more information.
Angioplasty with stent	A catheter (a fine, hollow tube) with a small inflatable balloon at its tip is passed into an artery in either the groin or arm. The operator then uses x ray screening to direct the catheter to a coronary artery until its tip reaches the narrowed or blocked section. The balloon is then gently inflated so that it squashes the fatty tissue against the artery wall. As a result, this widens the artery. The catheter contains a stent which is a short tube of stainless steel mesh. As the balloon is inflated, the stent expands so that it holds open the narrowed blood vessel. The balloon is then let down and removed, leaving the stent in place and allowing the blood to flow freely through the artery.

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Antenatal Screening	A detailed ultrasound scan, performed on all pregnant women at around 20 weeks, to check for normal fetal growth.
Aneurysm	If there is a progressive weakening of the wall of the aorta, it begins to 'balloon'. This is called an aneurysm. It will grow bigger and eventually rupture (usually fatal) if it is not diagnosed and treated.
Aorta	The large artery leading out of the left side of the heart which supplies the body with blood.
Aortic valve	The valve which regulates the flow of blood from the left ventricle into the aorta.
Arrhythmia	An abnormal heart rhythm.
Artery	A blood vessel carrying blood from the heart to the rest of the body.
Atheroma	This is fatty material that can build up within the walls of the arteries. When atheroma affects the coronary arteries, it can cause angina, heart attack or sudden death. When it affects the arteries to the brain it may cause a stroke. When it affects the leg arteries, it causes peripheral arterial disease. Atheroma can build up for many years before it causes problems.
Atherosclerosis	The build up of fatty materials within the walls of the arteries.
Atria	The two upper chambers of the heart. They act as collecting chambers to fill the ventricles (the two lower chambers of the heart).
Atrial fibrillation	A type of arrhythmia (abnormal heart rhythm) in which the atria (the upper two chambers of the heart) beat very rapidly. Atrial fibrillation can cause quite unpleasant palpitations and sometimes breathlessness. In some cases, the fast irregular rhythm may cause a clot to form in the heart.

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Beta blocker	Beta blockers are drugs that block the actions of the hormone adrenaline which makes the heart beat faster and more vigorously. They are used to help prevent attacks of angina, to lower blood pressure, to help control abnormal heart rhythms and to reduce the risk of a further heart attack in people who have already had one.
Cardiac rehabilitation	The process which helps people with heart disease to regain and, if possible, improve their health. Ideally cardiac rehabilitation should start when, or even before, the person is admitted to hospital, and continue when they are in hospital and after they have been discharged. Cardiac rehabilitation involves explaining what has happened to the heart, doing exercise or physical activity, and support and education to encourage long term lifestyle changes. See also 'rehabilitation programme'. This may be run as a team based approach, including a range of health professionals such as nurses, physiotherapists, pharmacists and dietician.
Cardiomyopathy	A disease of the heart muscle.
Carotid artery stenosis	Carotid artery stenosis is a narrowing of the carotid arteries. These are the main arteries in the neck that supply blood to the brain. Carotid artery stenosis is a major risk factor for ischaemic stroke.
Complex decongestive therapy (CDT)	The recognised conservative two phased approach to the management of lymphoedema. It encompasses - manual lymphatic drainage, multi-layer lymphoedema bandaging, remedial exercise, skin care and patient education.
Diabetes	A disease caused when the body does not produce enough insulin, or when the cells of the body can no longer use the insulin
Drug eluding stent	A drug eluding stent is a stent which has been coated with medication to help prevent the artery closing off again.
ECG	See 'electrocardiogram'.

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Electrocardiogram	Also known as an 'ECG'. This is a test to record the rhythm and electrical activity of the heart. Small sticky patches (electrodes) are attached to a person's arms, legs, and chest and are connected to a recording machine. The recording machine picks up the electrical signals produced by each heartbeat. An ECG can detect abnormalities of heart rate and rhythm. It can also tell if a person has experienced a heart attack, either recently or some time ago. It can also detect if the heart has become enlarged or is working under strain.
Hypertension	High blood pressure.
Myocardial infarction	A heart attack
Peripheral arterial disease	This occurs when fatty acids (atheroma) build up in the inner walls of arteries and affect blood circulation. This is most common in the arteries to the legs and feet.
POSSUM	POSSUM stands for Physiological and Operative Score Severity for the enumeration of mortality and morbidity. It is a scoring system used in vascular surgery which adjusts the risk of a surgical procedure based on a patient's physiological condition and therefore allows a more accurate comparison of performance.
Proband	Proband is the first affected family member who seeks medical attention for a genetic disorder
Pulmonary	To do with the lungs
Pulmonary artery	The artery that carries blood from the heart to the lungs.
Rehabilitation programme	A programme for people who have had a heart attack or heart surgery covering exercise, relaxation as well as information on lifestyle and treatment. The structure of the programme can vary but people usually start the programme about four weeks after a heart attack or heart surgery. It may involve attending once or twice a week for between 6 and 12 weeks, although some programmes run longer.

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Revascularisation	Any procedure that restores blood flow to a part of the body.
Stent	A short tube of expandable mesh which is inserted at the part of the artery which is to be widened by coronary angioplasty (see angioplasty with stenting). The stent helps to support the artery wall (see also drug eluting stent)
Stroke	A stroke is a localised neurological deficit with a vascular cause, lasting longer than 24 hours. It is usually due to either a blockage of the blood vessels to the brain, or by a bleed into the brain.
Thrombolysis	Drug treatment to help dissolve a clot which is blocking an artery.
Thrombus	A blood clot.
Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA)	A transient ischaemic attack (TIA) causes similar symptoms as a stroke but lasts less than 24 hours. This is a strong indicator of the risk of a more serious stroke.