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Highest ever cardiac arrest survival in capital

7 November 2014

People who have a cardiac arrest in the capital are more likely to survive than ever before, according to figures released today by London Ambulance Service.

Almost a third (32.4 per cent*) of patients whose hearts stopped beating were resuscitated and discharged from hospital last year – the highest survival rate since records began 15 years ago.

Medical Director Fiona Moore said: "Not only are our staff doing an excellent job resuscitating and stabilising patients, but the public are helping to save lives on the streets of London too. We've seen more bystanders than ever before providing basic life support to cardiac arrest patients. Our call takers also do a great job giving instructions over the phone on how to do CPR and use a defibrillator until help arrives."

Last year, bystanders attempted cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on 55.8% of cardiac arrest patient – up four per cent from the year before.

Fionna added: "This reflects the work we've been doing around the capital to teach Londoners basic lifesaving skills and I'd encourage everyone to learn this vital skill, as you never know when someone might need your help."

"Chances of survival increase considerably when CPR is carried out and it's great news that more people are willing to get involved and help in this way."

Twenty-eight-year-old Paul Cowling (pictured, right) was playing football when he had a cardiac arrest a year ago. He was given CPR by his team-mates until paramedics arrived and shocked him 15 times with a defibrillator to restart his heart.



He said: "It could have been a very different story for me – I'm definitely one of the lucky ones. Since my cardiac arrest, we've learnt basic life support so we know how to help people in the future. I'd urge everyone to do the same so that more lives can be saved."

Paul was diagnosed with dilated cardiomyopathy and fitted with an internal defibrillator, which will restart his heart if it stops again in the future.

The Service's cardiac figures also show that almost a quarter of cardiac arrests happened in a public place and where a defibrillator was used promptly by members of the public the chances of survival increased.

Fionna added: "I'd like to urge Londoners and businesses to get behind our Shockingly Easy campaign to get more of the machines across the capital and help save more lives."

For more information on CPR training or to get a defibrillator for your business call 020 7783 2366 or visit www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/shockinglyeasy

Ends

Notes to editors

- A cardiac arrest is when the heart stops pumping blood around the body. This is different to a heart attack, which is when an artery becomes obstructed, restricting the flow of blood to the heart.
- For further information about this news release please contact the communications department on 020 7783 2286.

*Utstein cardiac arrest survival rate

Crash24 - Tuesday 6 December 2011

Control room tweetathon - Thursday 4 October

Taking care in the hot weather

Use us wisely

Give blood

Know your blood pressure

The Utstein cardiac arrest survival rate in London in 2013/14 is 32.4 per cent (187 survivors out of 578 cardiac arrest patients), up from 28.4 per cent in 2012/13. This is the highest level it has ever been in London.

Utstein is an internationally-recognised method of calculating out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival rates and focuses on a subgroup of patients who have the best chance of a successful resuscitation. The calculation takes into account the number of patients discharged alive from hospital who had resuscitation attempted following a cardiac arrest of presumed cardiac cause, and who also had their arrest witnessed by a bystander and an initial cardiac rhythm of ventricular fibrillation or ventricular tachycardia (ie a rhythm that is suitable to shock using a defibrillator).

Overall cardiac arrest survival rate

A total of 436 out of 4,239 cardiac arrest patients who ambulance staff attempted to resuscitate survived to be discharged from hospital (10.3 per cent). This is up from 9.3 per cent in 2013.

Additional figures from London Ambulance Service Cardiac Arrest Annual Report

- Over three quarters of cardiac arrests in London happened in the home (77.7 per cent)
- Almost a quarter of cardiac arrests occurred in public (22.3 per cent)

Of those which happened in public:

- - 461 happened in the street
 - 80 took place at work
 - 75 took place in a healthcare facility eg GP surgery, walk in centre
 - 64 took place on public transport
 - 50 took place at a social venue, eg cinema, pub, restaurant
 - 39 at a hotel or hostel
 - 36 in a shop or bank
 - 34 at a sports or leisure club
 - 23 in parkland or woodland
 - 18 at an airport
- Bystanders attempted basic life support before ambulance staff arrived in 55.8 per cent of cardiac arrests (up four per cent)
- The majority of patients (63 per cent) were men
- The average age of a cardiac arrest patient was 66
- Cardiac arrests happened most commonly between 8am to midday (24.1 per cent)
- Cardiac arrests happened most frequently on a Monday (15.9 per cent)
- Most occurred in the month of December (10.3 per cent)
- Defibrillators in public places
- There are now over 2,000 sites across London with at least one defibrillator.
- Survival from cardiac arrests is highest in leisure centres or sports clubs (44.1 per cent), followed by those that occur at work (33.3 per cent).
- In 2013/14 The London Ambulance Service provided Heartstart training courses teaching basic lifesaving skills to 19,944 people in London.