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Acute Heart Failure Syndrome

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Acute heart failure syndrome (AHFS) is a condition erupting when the heart is acutely unable to push enough volume of blood to meet the metabolic needs of the cells. It is currently under intense study, yet there is no consensus about its definition, epidemiology, pathophysiology and therapeutic methods. The uncertainty in its definition goes back to the poorly elucidation of its acuteness and evidence of failure, besides to its categorization. In AHFS there is not any need that ejection fraction or blood pressure be low. In one hand, the acute initiation of failure of the heart in a patient even with having normal ejection fraction or even high blood pressure can be regarded as this syndrome and on the other hand aggravation of previously stable heart failure with reasonable or low ejection fraction can be categorized in this syndrome, as well. This entity is more diagnosed and managed in ICUs by intensivists than by cardiologist in CCUs.

AHFS is prevalent in patients of more than 65 years of age. Many of the cases are patients with aggravation of previously stable failure. As there is not any precise and concise definition of this entity, many of the cases are not diagnosed, and are poorly-managed and discharged from ICUs without proper treatment; about one third of the patients are readmitted to ICUs or die within three months after discharge.

The etiology of acute heart failure might be a systemic phenomenon with involvement of the heart or the source of the failure might be a pathophysiological process within the heart itself like acute MIs.