

## **Heart Failure Question and Answer**

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### **Q: What is Heart Failure?**

A: Heart Failure is the failure of heart organ to execute its function. The condition where the heart unable to pump the blood that body needs for the metabolism, yet the heart has to work harder compares in normal condition to perform its role. In other words, heart failure is the condition where heart is "fail" to perform its function. The primary function of heart is to receive the blood from each part of body and then pump that blood.

### **Q: What things can cause heart failure?**

A: There are lot of diseases that could cause heart failure. Almost all types of heart diseases will cause the heart failure if they do not treat well. Below is the list of them:

- Hypertension
- Coronary Heart Disease
- Valve Heart Disease
- Diabetes
- Heart Infection
- Congenital Heart Disease
- Systemic disease like sarcoidosis or amyloidosis
- Several unknown cause disease (idiopathic)

### **Q: How often heart failure found?**

A: A study report that total heart failure patients in United States almost 6 million people and more than 23 million around the world on 2013. The number of heart failure patients could be more because many people is undiagnosed. Based on Basic Health Research (Riskesdas), on 2013 the number heart failure patients is 0,3% of all Indonesian. Population in Indonesia itself is more than 250 million people on 2013, so the number is huge.

### **Q: What is the symptoms and signs of heart failure?**

A: Symptoms and signs of heart failure are variative depends on the cause or the level of disease severity, from mild symptoms to harsh one that disturb daily activities, like:

- In activity one get fatigue easily or breathing difficulty and on harsh condition may feel shortness of breath when rest.
- The shortness of breath will lessen when lay down with few pillows or sit down.
- Heart pounding
- Chest pain
- Nausea, bloated, easily get full, loss of appetite
- Unknown cause drastic weight loss
- Swollen feet and stomach
- Less urinate

Unfortunately, these symptoms and signs are common found in other disease like lungs, liver or kidney disease. And for that, you need doctor consultation to determine the cause of these symptoms.

**Q: If I have the suspected heart failure symptoms and signs and need doctor consultation, what kind of treatment shall be done by the doctor?**

A: From the beginning of consultation, doctor will ask the symptoms you have in detail. Then doctor will continue to physical examination di polyclinic room. Next examination will depend on early diagnosis and generally it includes electrocardiography (ECG), chest Rontgen (X-ray), laboratory examination and echocardiography (heart USG). The following examination could be heart catheterization, cardiac MRI or other examination. But it all depends on your doctor who check your condition. And of course the doctor will considerate the benefit and risk of any procedure because every procedure has side effect risk.

**Q: I have been heard that on heart failure occurs heart pump disruption because of the weaken of heart muscle. If my echocardiography result show my heart pump function is normal, then is it definitely the symptoms that I have are not because heart failure?**

A: Not exactly. Not all heart failure patients have decreasing heart pump. In the past, all heart failure patients are considered having a decreasing heart pump, nevertheless with further research found that many heart failure patients still have good heart pump. Today, based on heart pump function the heart failure is divided into two groups. They are heart failure with reduced ejection fraction and heart failure with preserved ejection fraction. Hence, a good heart pump cannot be use as point of reference to eliminate heart failure diagnosis.

**Q: How is heart failure generally treatment?**

A: Primary principle of treating heart failure is to cure the triggered cause of the heart failure. For instance, if the triggered cause is coronary heart disease (CHD) then it needs CHD medication and stent implantation procedure or coronary bypass graft surgery. If the triggered cause is heart valve disorder then it may need surgical procedure or other intervention according indication.

Besides that, for half of the case there are medication need to be took regularly according to doctor advised. These medication may lessen the complaints and improving life quality. For information, most of the heart failure medication are similar with other heart disease medication treatment. Thus, you shall need to take the medication even you have normal blood pressure.

Another thing that not be forgotten is changing lifestyles like stop smoking, consume less salt, limiting liquid intake, physical activity according doctor advised. In addition, the support and motivation of family or significant other around the patient is important because it may take quite some time to have heart failure treatment and patient may feel bored or depressed which will hinder the succession of the therapy.

**Q: What will happen if heart failure is not treating well?**

A: The heart pump function will worsen, with symptoms and signs like swollen feet and stomach with the shortness of breath during rest position. Aside from that, it will make weight loss, kidney and liver complication. In some cases, there could be stroke or blockage in other parts of body like feet. Fatal heart rhythm disorder may occurred.