**Blood test identifies more heart attacks**

**A highly sensitive blood test could help identify heart attacks in thousands of patients who would otherwise have gone undiagnosed,.**

A University study evaluating the test, which identifies heart muscle damage, found that it detected heart attacks in a third more patients who were admitted to hospital with chest pain than previous tests.

The research also shows us that it is not just patients with major heart attacks where treatment can make a difference.

Even patients with comparatively minor heart damage benefit from these treatments.

**Dr Nicholas Mills**

***The University's British Heart Foundation Centre for Cardviovascular Science***

**Impact of diagnosis**

After this test was introduced into clinical practice the risk of readmission to hospital with - or dying from - another heart attack within the following year was halved.

Patients were more likely to see a specialist and to receive better treatment following the introduction of the more sensitive test.

**Blood test**

When patients are admitted to hospital with chest pain, a blood test is taken.

This measures a protein called troponin that is released when heart cells are damaged during a heart attack.

University researchers evaluating the more-sensitive test detected troponin at levels four-times lower than the previous standard test.

This then identified patients with smaller amounts of heart damage.

Unfortunately, the use of outdated diagnostic thresholds for troponin continues to be widespread and lowering this threshold remains a highly contentious issue amongst doctors.

We provide compelling evidence that adopting a more sensitive test and lowering the threshold for detection of heart muscle damage is appropriate and will substantially improve the outcome of patients with chest pain and suspected heart attack.

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The study was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Researchers analysed data from more than 2,000 patients who had been admitted to the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh with chest pain and suspected heart attack.