**Madeleine McCann's father warns thousands of heart patients are undergoing needless surgery, which is costing the NHS £60m a year, due to an inaccurate test**

* **Exercise testing is used to assess people with the condition aortic stenosis**
* **Patients are asked to pedal a bike to see if they require surgery to correct it**
* **But new research has found that the test only has a 60 per cent accuracy rate**
* **It was led by Professor Gerry McCann, a cardiologist at University of Leicester**

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Thousands of patients could unnecessarily be having surgery due to an inaccurate test, a heart doctor has warned.

And needless operations performed because of the exam may be costing the[**NHS**](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/nhs/index.html)£60 million a year, says Professor Gerry McCann.

The cardiologist, father of Madeleine who has been missing since May 2007, led a team of researchers from the University of Leicester.

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Exercise testing has been used to assess people with the heart valve condition aortic stenosis (AS) since 2012.

It has been approved by the American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology and the European Society of Cardiology.

Patients are asked to pedal a stationary bike to see if they require surgery to correct the problem, caused by a narrowing of the aortic valve opening.

But a study published in the European Heart Journal shows that the test only has a 60 per cent accuracy rate, suggesting many are sent for surgery prematurely.

They found that thousands of heart patients could unnecessarily be having surgery due to an inaccurate test for a condition

Each year in the UK about 10,000 aortic valve replacements are carried out at a cost of up to £15,000 per procedure.

According to the new findings on a study of 174 patients, roughly 40 per cent of these operations may be unnecessary.

Professor McCann said: 'There is no doubt that valve replacement therapy is highly effective for patients with symptoms, however there are risks involved.

'It's a major operation and there's a 1 per cent chance of people dying or having a stroke during or after. There's also the chance they could develop an infection.

'It can often take six months to recover, but if they survive they tend to do very well afterwards.

'However, if we know a patient has AS and no symptoms and we do nothing, there's also a 1 per cent chance they will die, so there's a fine line between whether we should intervene or not.'

Almost twice the number of people who became breathless during the test did not develop symptoms within a year, he added.

Professor McCann plans to search for a more accurate way of deciding which patients with AS should undergo surgery.

A clinical study comparing early surgery with waiting for symptoms to develop is needed, he said.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-4263480/Inaccurate-heart-test-costing-NHS-says-Gerry-McCann.html#ixzz4eJNpQnqK>   
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