

Heart failure hospitalizations on the rise in US

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(HealthDay)—More Americans are going to the hospital due to heart

failure, a new study finds.

The good news is that the [hospital](#) stays are getting shorter and survival rates for those hospitalized with [heart failure](#) are higher than in the past, researchers said.

The study included data from more than 15 million congestive heart failure-related [hospital admissions](#) in the United States between 1996 and 2009.

The number of hospitalizations for heart failure rose from just over 1 million in 1996 to almost 1.2 million in 2009. But the average length of stay fell from about six days to five days over that same period. In addition, the in-hospital death rate declined from almost 5 percent to just over 3 percent, the study found.

Shorter hospital stays and lower death rates are due to advances in care, such as new drugs and medical devices, according to the University of Pittsburgh researchers.

The study authors said more needs to be done to reduce hospital admissions and readmissions for heart failure, particularly for patients with less severe symptoms who could be treated with aggressive outpatient therapy.

"There has been significant progress in heart failure management over the past two decades, but more has to be done," study corresponding author Dr. Muhammad Bilal Munir, a clinical instructor of medicine, said in a university news release.

"The number of hospitalizations has increased, identifying a need to implement heart-failure quality measures stringently to reduce these admissions, therefore reducing heart failure-associated health care

costs," he added.

The study was presented Nov. 12 at the annual meeting of the American Heart Association, in New Orleans, and published at the same time in the journal *Clinical Cardiology*.

More than 5 million Americans have heart failure. Close to 500,000 are newly diagnosed each year. The direct and indirect costs of heart failure are more than \$30.7 billion a year, according to the American Heart Association.

More information: The U.S. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute has more on [heart failure](#).

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