

Key Facts about Heart Blankets

Pioneering treatment for heart disease has reached an exciting stage which could mean benefits to thousands of patients as well as huge savings for the NHS.

Scientists at Leeds University, funded for the last six years by Heart Research UK, are at a crucial stage in the development of an innovative artificial heart muscle that helps the heart to beat. The technology, made of a web of special material positioned around the heart, has sensors that recognise when the heart wants to beat, triggering a series of miniature motors to make the web contract, helping the heart push blood around the body.

The device has been tested on a mechanical model of the heart and once mechanics perfect variables such as timing and length of squeeze, the team will simulate the effects of different heart diseases to gauge the potential uses for the device. This means the heart can be aided without major intrusive heart surgery or the need for a transplant.

Barbara Harpham, National Director at Heart Research UK said:

“Heart disease is on the increase and, in particular, heart failure is a growing problem. This very debilitating disease will be a growing burden on the NHS, especially for palliative care. Anything that saves the NHS money must be worth pursuing, especially if it brings along with it major benefits to patients.

“This technology will be an important development in the treatment of heart disease and in cases where, currently, the only long term treatment is transplantation. It could radically reduce the cost of surgery and after care.

“This is a truly amazing new technology that could benefit thousands and save a massive amount of money for the NHS, not to mention the heartache for families and patients. It’s great that it is being developed here in the UK and funded by a UK charity.”

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