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HIDDEN RISK Urgent warning as 300,000 Brits living with stealth disease that could kill within 5 years

Vanessa Chalmers, Digital Health Reporter 8:15, 26 Jan 2022 | Updated: 21:27, 26 Jan 2022

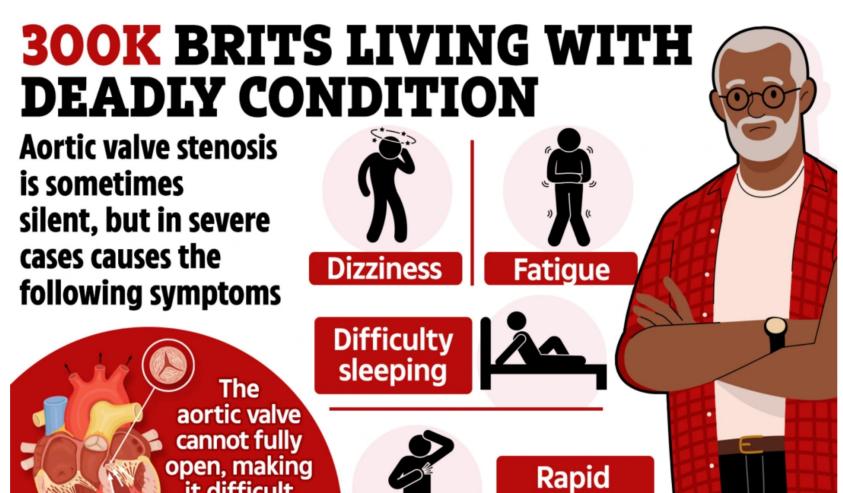
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SOME 300,000 Brits are living with a stealth disease that could kill them within five years, doctors have warned.

A third of those are likely to have no idea they are affected because they do not show clear symptoms.



A heart condition is plaguing an estimated 300,000 Brits - 100,000 have no idea, researchers estimate Credit: Getty - Contributor





The symptoms of aortic valve stanosis, when it shows

Aortic valve stenosis, or AS, is a heart condition that often shows no symptoms until it's already too late.

The condition is when the heart's aortic valve narrows, reducing or blocking blood flow from the heart into the main artery to the body (aorta).

This can cause chest pain, dizziness, fatigue, or a rapid, fluttering heartbeat in the more severe and life-threatening cases.

Some people are more prone to getting it, including those of older age, with diabetes, high blood pressure, or heart conditions from birth.

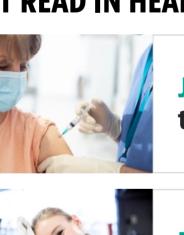
Given the ageing of the UK population, it is thought that there may be a large pool of as yet undiagnosed people.

Researchers in the UK and Australia set out to estimate how many people could be living with the condition now, and of those, how many are at risk of death.

They did this using population data and previous estimates of aortic valve stenosis prevalence.

According to their calculations, the overall prevalence of severe aortic stenosis among the over 55s in the UK in 2019 could be almost 1.5 per cent - equal to around 300,000 at any one time.

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Just under 200,000 (68 per cent) were symptomatic - meaning they had severe disease that would be eligible for surgery.

The remaining 90,000 (32 per cent) had a "silent" case of the condition and will probably not be diagnosed unless they are being screened for another problem.

Without timely treatment, up to 172,859 (59 per cent of the overall total) will die over the next five years to 2024, it's estimated.

That's equal to 35,000 people every year, according to the findings published in the journal Open Heart.

Nearly 10,000 of these deaths will be among 55–64 year olds.

The NHS says that someone with mild syptoms of aortic valve stenosis is monitored every year or two.

If symptoms become severe, it's likely they will need surgery to stop the condition worsening to heart failure or sudden cardiac death.

Research has found that people with severe aortic stenosis who are not treated with surgery have a 25 per cent chance of dying in the first year after the symptoms start. The risk is 50 per cent in the second year.

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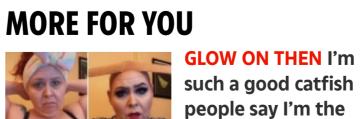


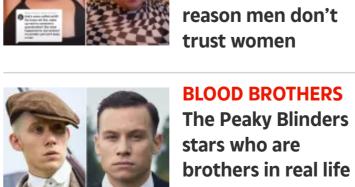
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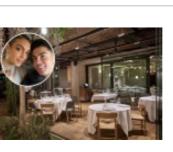
The researchers, led by Geoffrey Strange, a cardiologist at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, said: "In conclusion, this study suggests that severe [aortic stenosis] is a common condition affecting many individuals within the UK population aged 55 [and older].

"Without appropriate detection and intervention, their survival prospects are likely to be poor."

The researchers are concerned the NHS will not be able to cope with the







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wave of older people with aortic disease over the next few years.

Symptoms of aortic stenosis

• Rapid, fluttering heartbeat

• Trouble breathing or feeling

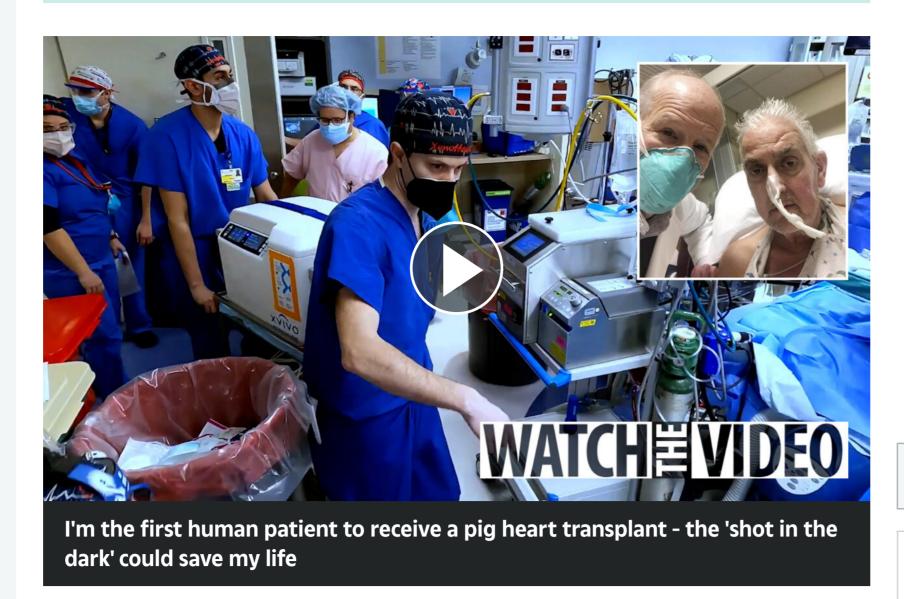
short of breath

include:

• Chest pain

Many people with aortic stenosis don't experience noticeable	 Feeling dizzy or light-headed, even fainting
symptoms until the amount of	
restricted blood flow becomes	 Difficulty walking short
greatly reduced.	distances

- Symptoms of aortic stenosis may • Swollen ankles or feet
 - Difficulty sleeping or needing to sleep sitting up
 - Decline in activity level or reduced ability to do normal activities



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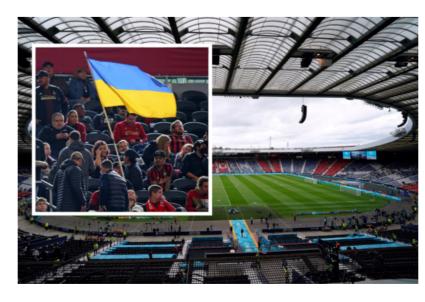
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