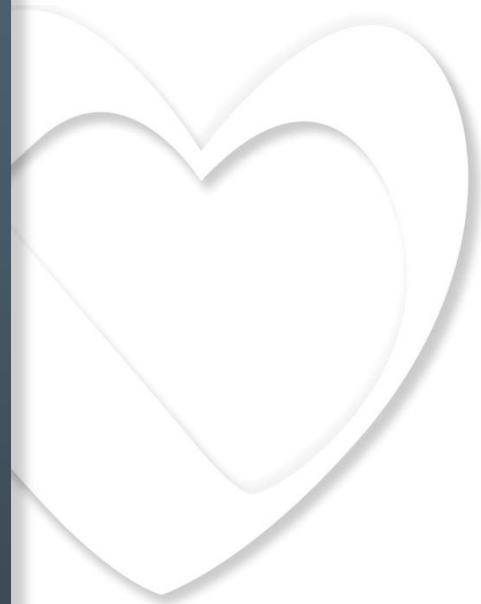


Heart Failure Awareness Day 2017

Report from: Malta

Name of reporter: Dr Robert G Xuereb

Email address: robert-g.xuereb@gov.mt



Public event / open clinic

European Heart Failure Awareness Day in Malta

- **On 5th May, on the occasion of European Heart Failure Awareness Day 2017, the Maltese Cardiac Society and Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Directorate in collaboration with Novartis organized activities to increase awareness on Heart Failure in Malta amongst patients and the public.**

Public event / open clinic

- **The highlight of the activities were educational lectures at Mater Dei Hospital entitled :**
- **`The Heart Failure Epidemic in Malta` by Dr Robert Xuereb, President Maltese Cardiac Society and**
- **`Protect your heart – the Mediterranean Way` by Dr Paula Vassallo, Director, Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Directorate.**

Public event / open clinic



Cardiac Services
Cardiac Lab
Mater Dei Hospital
Tel: 2545 4640

Heart Failure Clinic nurses sent personal invitations to all Heart Failure Patients attending the Heart Failure Clinic at Mater Dei Hospital, to inform them about the activities organised on European Heart Failure Awareness Day 2017.

18th April 2017

Dear _____

The Department of Cardiology would like to invite you for a talk on the occasion of Heart Failure Awareness Day

Date: 5th May

Time: Midday till 2 pm

Venue: Seminar Room 2 (opposite Mater Dei Hospital Chapel)

You are welcome to bring someone with you for this occasion.

Talks will be given by

- Dr Robert G Xuereb Chairman Department of Cardiology, President of the Maltese Cardiac Society
- Dr Paula Vassallo Director, Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Directorate

Monitoring of Blood Pressure, Blood Glucose and BMI will be performed on the day.

Refreshments will also be served after the talks.

For further queries you can contact Heart Failure Clinic on 2545 4640

Yours Sincerely,

Heart Failure Clinic



Public event / open clinic

Heart Failure Epidemic in Malta

Heart Failure Awareness Day 2017
Mater Dei Hospital
5th May 2017

Dr Robert G Xuereb
MD FRCP(L) FRCP(E) FASA FESC FACC
President Maltese Cardiac Society
Chairman Department of Cardiology



Public event / open clinic

Protect your heart
The Mediterranean way

Dr Paula Vassallo
Director Health Promotion and
Disease Prevention



Public event / open clinic



Public event / open clinic



www.escardio.org/HFA

Speaker Dr Robert G Xuereb



Public event / open clinic



Public event / open clinic



Speaker Dr Paula Vassallo

www.escardio.org/HFA

*Speaker Dr Robert G Xuereb – Media
were present*



Public event / open clinic



www.escardio.org/HFA

*Heart Failure Patients attending the
public lectures*



Public event / open clinic

The Heart Failure Clinic and the Cardiac Rehabilitation teams at Mater Dei hospital assessed the risk of Heart Failure by checking weight and body mass index, waist circumference, blood sugar levels and blood pressure.



Public event / open clinic



Cardiac Rehabilitation Nurses checking BP, blood glucose levels etc.

www.escardio.org/HFA



People queuing to have their parameters checked

Public event / open clinic



The Health Promotion Unit were also on site to promote the various educational programmes available and provide advise on the importance of weight control, diet, exercise, smoking cessation, diabetes, blood pressure and cholesterol control.

Public event / open clinic

- **Posters were set up at entrance of the main hospital (Mater Dei Hospital) and various private clinics, 2 weeks in advance of European Heart Failure Awareness Day 2017.**
- **The aim was to increase awareness amongst patients and the public on the events that were going to be organised on European Heart Failure Awareness Day 2017 and to encourage patients to attend.**

Public event / open clinic



Heart Failure Awareness Day 5th May 2017

Lectures

- 1. Time: 12:30pm**
“The Heart Failure Epidemic in Malta”
Dr. Robert G. Xuereb
Chairman Department of Cardiology,
President, Maltese Cardiac Society

On the day you can
monitor your:

• Blood Pressure 

• Sugar Level 

- 2. Time: 01:00pm**
“Protect your heart - the Mediterranean way”
Dr. Paula Vassallo
Director, Health Promotion and Disease
Prevention Directorate

• Body Mass Index
(BMI) 

Time: 12:00pm – 02:00pm

Venue: Mater Dei Hospital Room C2 (opposite the chapel)

Open to the public, Free entrance

Refreshments will be served following the lectures



 NOVARTIS

 Health Promotion & Disease
Prevention Directorate

 MATER DEI

TV and radio coverage

- **The activities organised for patients and the public on the occasion of European Heart Failure Awareness Day 2017 at Mater Dei Hospital were featured on Television Malta (TVM) News.** *(Television Malta (TVM) is operated by the national broadcaster, Public Broadcasting Services).*
- **Following the public lectures, TVM journalists also interviewed Dr Robert Xuereb, President Maltese Cardiac Society on Heart Failure in Malta.**

TV and radio coverage



TV and radio coverage



TV and radio coverage



*Patients asking questions to the speakers
- TVM News*

Newspaper and website coverage

- An article entitled *'European Heart Failure Awareness Day in Malta'* was published on the 21st May 2017, in The Sunday Times of Malta.



Newspaper and website coverage

HEALTH

The heart of the matter

An article was also published on The Circle Magazine entitled 'The Heart of The Matter' on the 4th June 2017. The Circle magazine is distributed with The Sunday Times of Malta.

HEART FAILURE IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST KILLERS IN TODAY'S SOCIETY, YET FEW PEOPLE ARE AWARE OF CAUSES, SYMPTOMS AND TREATMENT. THE RECENT EUROPEAN HEART FAILURE AWARENESS DAY SAW VARIOUS HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN MALTA RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT HEART FAILURE.

With one to two per cent of the population in Malta suffering from heart conditions, awareness about heart failure is a must. To mark the occasion of *European Heart Failure Awareness Day 2017*, which took place on May 5, the Maltese Cardiac Society and Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Directorate, in collaboration with Novartis, organised a series of activities to raise awareness about heart failure with the Maltese public.

Across Europe, 15 million adults live with heart failure and at least one in five people are at risk of developing the condition. These figures make heart failure a major health issue, yet most people do not know what it is and would not recognise symptoms if they had them. As Dr Robert Xuereb, Maltese Cardiac Society President, stated, more people are afraid of stroke, heart attacks and advanced cancer, even though heart failure is a bigger killer.

The highlight of the series of events were educational lectures that were held at Mater Dei Hospital. The lectures, entitled 'The Heart Failure Epidemic in Malta' and 'Protect your heart - the Mediterranean Way', were held by Dr Xuereb, President Maltese Cardiac Society and by Dr Paula Vassallo, Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Directorate Director, respectively.

"In Malta, heart failure is one of the leading causes of hospitalisation and prolonged hospital stays," Dr Xuereb explained when talking about the causes of heart failure. Common symptoms include shortness of breath, swelling of the feet, ankles or abdomen and fatigue; Dr Xuereb stressed the importance of seeking medical advice upon experiencing these symptoms.

Although at present there is no cure for heart failure, patients who are diagnosed early, follow their treatment and make lifestyle changes can live longer, feel better and be more active. Dr Xuereb also referred to the medication Sacubitril / Valsartan, a game-changer that doesn't only alleviate symptoms but also treats the condition itself, due to a unique mode of action which is thought to reduce the strain on the failing heart. This translates into a reduced mortality rate, less rehospitalisation and an improved quality of life for patients.


During her lecture, Dr Paula Vassallo, focused on the importance of a healthy lifestyle and Mediterranean diet, following



dietary guidelines issued by the Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Directorate. For those struggling to give up bad habits like smoking and unhealthy eating, the Directorate runs a series of self-management programmes where participants learn various skills to help them regain control over their lives. These programmes are offered free of charge in various localities.

A number of initiatives were also organised as part of the drive towards awareness about heart failure: the Heart Failure Clinic and the Cardiac Rehabilitation teams at Mater Dei Hospital assessed the risk of heart failure by checking weight and body mass index, waist circumference, blood sugar levels and blood pressure. The Health Promotion Unit were also on site to promote the various educational programmes available and provide advice on the importance of weight control, diet, exercise, smoking cessation, diabetes, blood pressure and cholesterol control.

What you need to know

- Due to an ageing population and risk factors such as obesity and lifestyle, the number of people diagnosed with heart failure is expected to increase by more than 25% before 2030.
- Heart failure is a debilitating and potentially life-threatening condition where the heart cannot pump enough blood around the body.
- Self-management is key: learn to recognise symptoms and know when to seek help. 

Eight key symptoms of heart failure

Even though heart failure is a **chronic condition**, it can be **effectively managed**. This means that being able to recognize and check the symptoms of chronic heart failure is especially important. Learn more about the signs and symptoms of chronic heart failure below.

Shortness of breath



Heart failure can cause the fluid in your body to gather in your lungs which may cause you to feel short of breath during everyday activities.

Shortness of breath when lying down



Lying flat may also make you feel short of breath so that you need to sleep sat up or with multiple pillows.

Rapid heartbeat



The heart sometimes starts to speed up to compensate for its reduced ability to pump blood around the body.

Loss of appetite



A build-up of fluid around the gut can affect digestion and might cause a loss of appetite, or make you feel sick when eating.

Tiredness



Heart failure means less oxygen-rich blood is circulating the body. Because your muscles and tissues need oxygen for energy, this means people with heart failure can feel tired very easily.

Swelling in the ankles, legs and abdomen



Clothes or shoes might feel tighter as fluid in the body builds up in the legs, ankles or abdomen causing them to swell up.

Sudden weight increase



Worsening heart failure may cause an increase in weight of more than two kilograms (about six pounds) in one week because fluid builds up in your body.

Frequency of urination



A reduced amount of blood reaches your kidneys when you have heart failure, causing you to urinate less frequently. Conversely, if you take diuretics (eg. water pills), you might urinate more frequently when the excess fluid in your body is eliminated.



To learn more about the symptoms of heart failure, and how you can check and manage them, explore www.KeepItPumping.com.

If you notice any of these symptoms, talk to your doctor right away.

References:

1. Frankowski P et al. 2016 ESC Guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic heart failure. *European Heart Journal* (2016) 37, 2129-2200.
©2016 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehw138> and www.escardio.org. First published online 20 May 2016.



June 2017

www.KeepItPumping.com

ASSOCIATION OF THE ESC



SOCIETY OF CARDIOLOGY®

Printed material for patients

- **Various Materials for Patients were distributed on European Heart Failure Awareness Day 2017 :**
- HF Patient Booklets (English version)
- HF Patient Booklets (Maltese version)
- HF Patient Symptom Checker (English version)
- HF Patient Symptom Checker (Maltese version)
- HF Symptom Checker Infographic (English version)
- HF Symptom Checker Infographic (Maltese version)



Patient Engagement

- **High patient interaction during both lectures delivered by Dr Robert Patients and Dr Paula Vassallo.**
- **The patients were very eager to listen and asked a lot of questions after the lectures.**



Comments

- **Successful event – very good attendance and high patient participation**
- **Patient education on Heart Failure in Malta is still very limited**
- **There is a need to increase awareness on Heart Failure amongst patients and the general public**
- **The European Heart Failure Awareness Day is a good opportunity to raise awareness on Heart Failure**