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### Heart attacks take toll on under 50s

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More people under the age of 50 are dying from heart attacks, cardiologists warn.

A recent study by the United Christian Hospital's cardiology division shows that of 107 patients who suffered a heart attack, 16 were under 50 years old, including four under 40.

"The tendency among younger people deserves public awareness. Heart attacks do not just strike the elderly," said Chan Chi-kin, vice president of the Hong Kong Public Hospital Cardiologists Association.

About 80 percent of patients were unaware of symptoms until they developed heart disease.

In Hong Kong, more than 6,400 people die from heart attacks each year, accounting for 15.6 percent of the annual death toll, the Department of Health said.

"With a sudden minor breakage in a heart vessel, a thrombus will jam the flow of blood and result in acute heart attack," said association president Stephen Tam Kin-ming, cardiologist at Yan Chai Hospital.

"Vessels become more and more fragile with the aging process. As a result, heart attacks are common among the elderly but those with high glucose and high blood pressure are also at risk," he added.

Tam also urged patients not to neglect chest pains and to seek immediate treatment.

A man called Hui, 47, told of his "lucky escape from death" after fainting on an escalator at an MTR station.

"I felt nothing wrong before the [heart attack]," said Hui, adding he never smoked and underwent regular check-ups.

After an angioplasty, he recovered three months later but lost some of his memory.

"A healthy lifestyle and diet will keep a healthy heart," he said.

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