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## ONE THIRD OF BRITONS AT RISK OF KILLER HEART DISEASE

Research launched today at the British Pharmaceutical Conference (BPC) in Manchester shows community pharmacists have a significant role to play in helping tackle the incidence of heart disease, which kills **117,000** British people every year.

Pharmacy researchers found **a third** of people who accessed a heart disease screening programme at Kingston University in London were at a moderate to high risk of developing heart disease and that **7%** already had heart disease. Deaths through coronary heart disease account for approximately one in five deaths among men and one in six deaths among women.<sup>1</sup>

The service was developed by Alliance Pharmacy and involved free coronary heart disease screening of more than **10,000** people in **217** community pharmacies.

Pharmacists reviewed information gathered from participants and then calculated their levels of coronary heart disease risk.<sup>2</sup>

Melandi van den Berg, Alliance Pharmacy teacher practitioner, co-authored the report as part of her PhD research into pharmacy services under the supervision of Dr Parastou Donyai, senior lecturer at Kingston University. Melandi said: "The screening procedure was simple and allowed pharmacists to identify people's level of risk to coronary heart disease.

"Irrespective of their risk to heart disease, or existing heart disease, participants were offered lifestyle advice by the pharmacists involved, and some people were referred to consult a GP," said Melandi.

This service attracted a high uptake among people at moderate to high risk of heart disease, indicating there may be a need for permanent screening programmes in community pharmacies.

“Community pharmacies are well placed to deliver such a service, especially for men, who access medical services less. Pharmacies are easy to access because they are located where we live, work and shop, you don’t need an appointment, and many services are free and offered outside normal surgery hours,” said Melandi.

The Government’s Community Pharmacy Contract aims to increase the public’s health knowledge, especially targeting ‘hard-to-reach’ individuals by focusing on primary health promotion. However, screening for diseases is not a part of the Contract.

**Ends**

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**Notes to Editors**

The British Pharmaceutical Conference – entitled “[The medicines maze: balancing risks and benefits](#)” – takes place from 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2007, at Manchester Central (formerly Manchester International Convention Centre). The theme of BPC 2007 is reflected throughout the programme, with keynote speeches and workshops addressing crucial technical and professional issues that are facing pharmacy today. The conference will showcase the latest developments in pharmaceutical science and practice research and include discussion and debate led by expert speakers.

## References

1. British Heart Foundation, [www.heartstats.org](http://www.heartstats.org).
2. Anderson KM, Odell PM, Wilson PW, Kannel WB. Cardiovascular disease risk profiles. Am Heart J. 1991; 121:293-298.