Civilization kills. Since 1990, more people have died from coronary heart disease than from any other cause. Unlike stroke, coronary heart disease is a world stage. Variations in death expectancy between countries in the major risk factors, especially blood pressure, smoking, physical activity and diet. While genetic factors play a part, 80% to 90% of people dying from coronary heart disease have one or more major risk factors that are influenced by lifestyle.

Death rates from coronary heart disease have decreased in North America and many western European countries. This decline has been due to improved prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, in particular reduced cigarette smoking among adults, and lower average levels of blood pressure and blood cholesterol. It is expected that 82% of the future increase in coronary heart disease mortality will occur in developing countries.

Of all coronary heart disease patients who die within 28 days after the onset of symptoms, about two-thirds die before reaching hospital. This highlights not only the need for early recognition of the warning signs of a heart attack, but also the need for prevention.

"People live with their own idiosyncrasies and die of their own illnesses." Vietnamese proverb

Despite improvements in survival rates, in the USA 1 in 4 men and 1 in 3 women still die within a year of a recognized first heart attack.

3.8 million men and 3.4 million women die worldwide each year from coronary heart disease.