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By Cara Simpson | 25 Jan 2014 12:41

Heart attack and strokes warning for elderly in cold homes

Expert says plunging temperatures can lead to higher blood pressure or fluctuations which can cause strain

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Elderly people are at greater risk of strokes and heart attacks due to low temperatures in the home, warns a local medical expert.

Professor Franco Cappuccio, of Warwick Medical School and University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust, has outlined how cold temperatures can lead to increased blood pressure in elderly people.

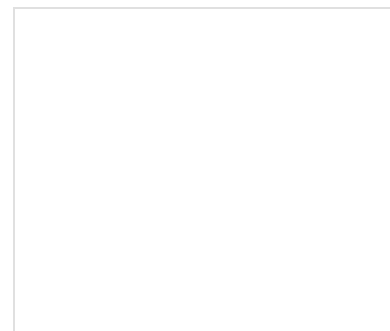
With falling temperatures making the headlines both home and abroad, there has been increased discussion about how vulnerable people can suffer respiratory illnesses.

The professor says the danger posed by low temperatures is twofold; it leads to higher blood pressure and consequently an increased risk of heart attacks, and amplifies the fluctuation in blood pressure throughout the day – a trigger for strokes.

Research has confirmed the relationship between temperature and blood pressure. Professor Cappuccio said: "Of course, from a practical point of view we can advise people to wrap up warm and put an extra blanket on the bed a night.

But what we see as the fundamental problem is that many people simply cannot afford to keep their central heating on overnight. The rising cost of energy means that our elderly friends and relatives – those more vulnerable to strokes and heart attacks – are put at an even higher risk."

He appeared on the BBC Inside Out programme this week to highlight the less well known cardiovascular risks.



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