EXCLUSIVE

By Hanna Geissler

Health Reporter

HEALTHY young women are dving of an under-diagnosed heart

supplying blood to the heart.

Charity Beat SCAD is campaigning for greater awareness to ensure the deadly condition is spotted as early as possible.

Often misdiagnosed as anxiety or a panic attack, it can strike at any age. Around 90 per cent of cases affect women and most victims have no risk factors for "classic" heart disease.

Beat SCAD chair Rebecca Breslin. said: "The true incidence of SCAD is unknown but based on cases identified in the UK over the last six years it is estimated that hundreds of healthy women are being affected

'They diagnose panic attacks or anxiety and fail to carry out a simple test'

by these atypical heart attacks each year. The true number is likely to be much higher because a lack of awareness is contributing to misdiagnosis and inadequate reporting."

Around one in 10 cases occurs during or within two years after

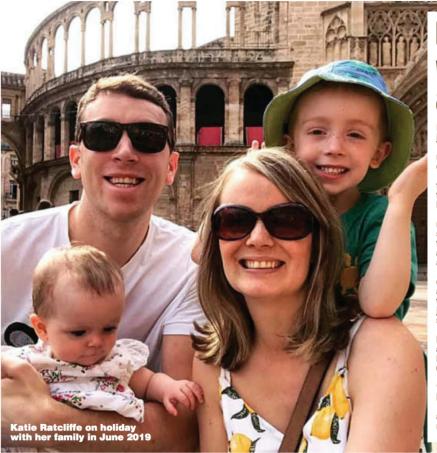
pregnancy. SCAD researcher Dr David Adlam, based at Glenfield Hospital in Leicester, said: "SCAD is a significant cause of heart attacks in and around the time of pregnancy causing around a quarter of events in pregnancy and half of events in the first few months afterwards."

The charity, launched in 2015 and largely run by survivors, is calling for more research and specialised clinics to support patients.

attack caused by SCAD in 2012 anxiety and fail to carry out or who have survived an episode. aged 34, said doctors also need to delay simple tests to rule out a be more aware of the symptoms.

She said: "Because patients are fit and healthy, when they complain of guidelines for how to manage the seriously until they had a Troponin oxygen, the more muscle dies which major long-term impact on somecardiac symptoms, such as pain in condition and huge variation exists the chest and arm, they are often in the quality of diagnosis and

Hidden heart complaint dying of an under-diagnosed near condition that cannot be predicted or prevented, a charity warns today. Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection occurs when a tear or bruise develops in an artery supplying blood to the heart. Killing head to the heart.



My wife, 33, woke with chest pains and died same day

KATIE Ratcliffe died suddenly aged 33 just days after her son's fifth birthday.

Doctors battled in vain to save the mother-of-two after she suffered a sudden coronary artery dissection (SCAD) in July.

She had felt ill during son Henry's party five days earlier. Katie, a primary school teacher in Cheshire, felt achy the next day but assumed it was just a touch of flu.

Her husband John, 35, said: "On Friday morning she woke me up at 6:15 and said she had pains in her chest. An ambulance took her to hospital and an ECG showed an irregular rhythm. They said she'd had a mild heart attack."

John rushed home to feed the couple's daughter Heidi, then eight-months-old, and pack an overnight bag while Katie was transferred to another hospital. When he joined them, he discovered she had suffered a SCAD while having an X-ray.

John said: "Upon arrival, I was told she had a 50/50 chance of surviving. They did a double heart bypass, but couldn't save her. It went from being woken up by her at 6am, to her not coming home that day."

Hundreds of people who knew the "happy, adventurous and wonderful" mum have raised almost £10,000 in her memory. John hopes Katie's story will help raise

awareness of SCAD and the importance of research into such heart conditions.

heart problem."

There are currently no NICE dismissed by health professionals, treatment, the charity said. Beat

Ms Breslin said: "Many of them describe horrific situations where they weren't listened to or taken blood test which showed they'd had a heart attack.

"We know of people who have

with indigestion medication," she added.

Ms Breslin said that the longer reduced heart function.

Philippa Hobson, of the British as possible."

Ms Breslin, who suffered a heart who diagnose panic attacks or SCAD supports hundreds of women been sent home mid-heart attack. Heart Foundation, said SCAD is a rare condition that usually affects

fit and healthy women.
She said: "Being diagnosed can the heart is starved of blood and be frightening and may have a will not recover. This then leads to one's life, so it is important that it's detected and treated as soon

Spontaneous **C**oronary **Artery Dissection**

10% of SCADs are pregnancy related (P-SCAD)

50% of post-partum coronary events are due to SCAD

P-SCAD patients have worse outcomes than other SCAD patients



Not a typical heart patient!

Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection

Victoria had a life-threatening coronary event soon after giving birth

50% of post-partum coronary events are due to SCAD*



www.beatscad.org.uk









*European Society of Cardiology, SCAD study group Position Paper February 2018 bit.ly/2FkRKmJ.



Photo courtesy Kate Beatty.