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Lord Kamall,
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9 January 2026

Uzair Syed

I want to thank you for your contribution in the Lords on 5th January 2026 on sudden cardiac death and screening of young people.

During the debate you quoted from the Journal of the American Medical Association stating that “since the introduction of screening, Italy has seen a fall in the incidence of sudden cardiac death in sport by 89% to a level that is now below the general population. Today, the rate in Italy is just one in 1.5 million, compared with one in 100,000 in the rest of the world.”

My officials have been unable to find this exact data in JAMA. They have however noted an article from 2006 [<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/203513>] that mentions an 89% reduction in sudden cardiac death in the Veneto region of Italy; this does not represent all of Italy.

Due to the significance of such claims the UK government reached out to their Italian counterparts. A previous Secretary of State for Health Jeremy Hunt formally requested data from the Italian Minister of Health. The request for the Italian screening programme data went unanswered.

If you have access to the data, my officials would be extremely grateful to have sight of it.

When responding to your comment regarding the incidence of sudden cardiac death in sport in Italy, I stated that, “Comparisons of screening programmes with other health systems can be misleading. For example, the programme in Italy operates only in the area around Venice; it is not a national screening programme. The published data is unclear and we have requested further information.”

I would like to offer clarification on this comment. This government takes its advice from the UK National Screening Committee. The Committee set certain criteria by which they determine whether a health intervention fits the definition of a screening programme. In the UK, a screening programme provides an end-to-end pathway starting with a defined (electronic) cohort), testing, treatment and care. The published papers suggest that Italy nationally mandates a test, rather than a full quality assured end to end programme with production of national statistics. We have been unable to locate available data for Italy. That is why I stated that Italy does not have a national screening programme.

I hope the above response proves useful. I will place a copy of this letter in the House library.

Yours sincerely,



BARONESS BLAKE OF LEEDS, CBE

PS Thank for your comments
updated me after the
session! Much appreciated.