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Registers in cardiovascular epidemiology

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Citation for published version (APA):

Reitsma, J. B. (1999). Registers in cardiovascular epidemiology.

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PREFACE

The work presented in this thesis emanated from the project 'Cardiovascular disease in the Netherlands, an epidemiological overview'. This project was initiated and sponsored by the Netherlands Heart Foundation. Its main goal was to provide the Netherlands Heart Foundation with relevant epidemiological information on cardiovascular disease in the Netherlands to be used in policymaking. The focus was primarily on information derived from the number of hospital admissions and deaths caused by various cardiovascular diseases. Trends over time were assessed as well as the interpretation of the latest figures. The results were used to inform the medical profession, the public and the media about the good and the bad news of the battle against cardiovascular disease.

The Netherlands Heart Foundation entered into an agreement with SIG Health Care Information (holder of the national register of hospital admissions) and Statistics Netherlands (holder of the register of causes of death). Aggregate data on admissions and deaths caused by cardiovascular disease were handed over to the Netherlands Heart Foundation. The full potential of the data could be explored in this way. From 1993 onwards, the author of this thesis has been employed to analyse the data and to report his findings to the Netherlands Heart Foundation. The project was carried out at the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics of the Academic Medical Center in Amsterdam (project leader prof. J.G.P. Tijssen). The Netherlands Heart Foundation has set up an advisory committee to monitor the progress of the project. Several experts in the field of cardiovascular disease are members of this committee, in addition to delegates of the participating parties (for full membership, see appendix A). One of the main outputs of the project is an annual publication named '*Cardiovascular disease in the Netherlands: data on morbidity and mortality*'. The project continues to exist, and has evolved and expanded in several ways since its initiation.

The central theme of this thesis - *Registers in Cardiovascular Epidemiology* - is directly related to the work carried out in this project.

