



CARDIOVASCULAR NEWS

Vacationers at risk of heart attack

A new Harris Interactive survey shows vacations may be more dangerous than we think. Some 84% of vacationers take part in behaviours and activities which increase risk of heart attack (the leading cause of vacation-related death).

The online poll surveyed 1,165 adult Americans who vacationed in the past year. Results showed 53% of vacationers feel stress at times, 34% eat too much, 59% of those who aren't usually physically active overexert themselves, and 36% overindulge in alcohol.

"More vacationers die from heart attacks than any other cause and this survey offers some interesting insight into factors that may contribute to this disturbing trend," said Dr. Karol E. Watson, director of the UCLA Center for Cholesterol and Hypertension Management.

Vacation heart attacks occur disproportionately during the first two days of the trip, linked to the stress of fighting traffic en route to vacation destinations, and/or adjusting to unfamiliar accommodations.

The survey also found risk of heart attack while on vacation is significantly higher during the morning hours. This finding is consistent with general cardiovascular trends.

Researchers suggest vacationers try not to overexert themselves, minimize stress by planning early, have a checkup before departing, and maintain a healthy diet while travelling in order to reduce the risk of heart attack while on vacation.

Your summer vacation could be a heart-stopper: New survey finds travelers may increase their risk for a heart attack, the leading vacation killer. Bridgewater (New Jersey). July 15, 2004.

Articulated prosthetic a first in North America

For the first time in North America, an articulated prosthetic device has been used in a patent foramen oval closure.

Dr. Reda Ibrahim performed the procedure at the Montreal Heart Institute. He used an innovative prosthetic device in the form of a double umbrella introduced percutaneously to close a patient's foramen oval. The prosthesis used is called Intrasept™, and is manufactured by an American company, Cardia.

The approach is not new; it has already been approved in Europe, where it was first tested. This was, however, the first time a North American interven-

tional cardiologist implanted a prosthetic device that adapts to the anatomy of the patient's heart (as opposed to the heart adapting to the prosthesis).

"This new prosthetic device is better than others made thus far for this type of procedure," said Dr. Ibrahim.

The procedure was projected simultaneously onto giant screens in a Montreal conference room and viewed by 300 international and Canadian experts in interventional cardiology.

The Montreal Heart Institute becomes the first in North America to use an articulated prosthetic device to perform a patent foramen oval closure. Montreal. June 15, 2004.

Lipitor® comes out strong

Lipitor®, Pfizer Inc.'s cholesterol-lowering medicine, significantly reduces strokes and heart attacks in patients with diabetes, according to the Collaborative Atorvastatin Diabetes Study (CARDS).

CARDS enrolled more than 2,800 patients with Type 2 diabetes, relatively low levels of cholesterol, and no history of heart disease. It is the largest study to test a statin in this patient population.

Major cardiovascular events were reduced by 37% for patients who took Lipitor. The Lipitor group also had 48% fewer strokes compared to placebo.

CARDS was stopped almost two years earlier than planned because of the significant benefits among

patients who took Lipitor compared to those who received placebo.

Two million Canadians, and 170 million people worldwide, suffer from diabetes (a leading risk factor for cardiovascular disease). The majority of diabetics will suffer a stroke or heart attack.

Type 2 diabetes is increasing worldwide, which researchers link to obesity, lack of exercise, and genetics.

Patients with diabetes taking Lipitor® experienced major reductions in heart attacks and strokes, new data show. Kirkland (Quebec). June 11, 2004.

Mini-strokes pose real risk

The Heart and Stroke Foundation warns untreated transient ischemic attacks (TIAs) put almost 21,000 Canadians at increased risk of stroke, heart attack, or death every year. Still, recent studies show that only a minority of TIA patients receive appropriate medical followup.

“Because the symptoms of a mini-stroke or TIA can go away in a few minutes or hours, people don't realize just how serious they are,” says Dr. Michael Hill, researcher with the Heart and Stroke Foundation and lead author of a new study on the topic.

He says thousands of strokes go unprevented because TIAs are under-recognized and under-treated.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation says better, quicker treatment of TIA could reduce the risk of stroke and death for many patients.

The foundation has joined with the Canadian Stroke Network and other partner organizations to develop a national stroke strategy they hope will benefit people in all provinces. *PCard*

Undetected mini-strokes threaten thousands, warns Heart and Stroke Foundation. Montreal/Ottawa. June 8, 2004.