



# CARDIOVASCULAR NEWS

## **New Test Could Predict Risk of Heart Attack**

A new blood test may help improve the ability to precisely predict a patient's risk of heart attack. For the first time, researchers have concluded a study that documented the rise and fall of a blood level marker in patients for an extended period of time following a heart attack.

Researchers ran a series of blood tests over seven months to determine whether oxidised low-density lipoprotein measurements were associated with acute heart problems. The study assessed heart attack patients, those with unstable angina, patients with stable coronary artery disease who had not suffered any new problems for at least a year, patients who had normal coronary arteries (based on angiogram results), and healthy control subjects. Because the markers changed only in people who had acute coronary syndromes (unstable angina or heart attack), researchers may be able to apply these tests before patients become ill, and possibly to predict risk.

Component of coronary artery plaques could help predict heart attack risk. Bethesda (Maryland), February 5, 2003.

## **A Partnership to Improve Health in Canada**

Aspirin® and MedicAlert® have embarked on a joint program to help safeguard the health of Canadians. To encourage those who may be exposed to undue risk and, therefore, may need the protection of MedicAlert, Aspirin is offering consumers a \$5 rebate on the purchase of a MedicAlert bracelet or necklace as part of the new membership drive.

In support of the Canadian MedicAlert Foundation's charitable mission, the Bayer Foundation has generously donated \$10,000 to help further MedicAlert's Member Assistance Program. This program ensures that Canadians living with limited financial means have access to this life-saving service.

In the event of an emergency, a MedicAlert member's bracelet links to the MedicAlert 24-hour emergency hotline, giving health professionals immediate access to a member's medical record in order to expedite diagnosis and treatment.

Aspirin® and MedicAlert® work together to help safeguard the health of Canadians. Toronto (Ontario), January 20, 2003.

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## Curbing Youth Smoking

In an effort to discourage Canadian youth from smoking, Pharmacia Consumer Healthcare has donated \$10,000 from proceeds generated by sales of Nicorette® and Nicoderm® during National Non-Smoking Week, from January 19 to 25. This donation was made through a partnership with the Canadian Council for Tobacco Control as part of its mandate to support the National Strategy for Tobacco Control.

This is the second year Pharmacia has committed itself to this initiative. Last year's donation was awarded to seven projects across Canada.

Last year, during National Non-Smoking Week, Pharmacia established a donation campaign called "Stop so they don't start," with the goal of urging Canadian smokers to stop smoking, and of preventing young girls and boys from picking up the habit. According to the latest statistics, close to one in four teenagers currently smoke, and among this population, young girls are smoking the most.

"Stop so they don't start" donation campaign. Montreal (Quebec), January 18, 2003.

## Slow Adoption of Medical Research

In the first ever comparative analysis of the National Disease and Therapeutic Index with the National Ambulatory Medical Care Surveys for 1990 to 2000, American researchers found physicians may be slow to take advantage of new research findings.

Results from the recent study showed that while prescription rates rose during the '90s, they still appeared to be below recommended levels by early 2002. The use of warfarin for atrial fibrillation, beta blockers, and acetylsalicylic acid (ASA) for coronary artery disease, and angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors for treating heart failure were all lower than expected.

Researchers pointed out that these surveys may not reflect all medication use. Physicians might not report when patients are taking over-the-counter ASA, and the surveys fail to show when patients are not receiving a drug because of other medical conditions or medications.

That being said, researchers concluded that the findings of this study suggest more work is needed to understand why physicians may not be putting the findings of medical research into practice.

Low rates of effective medication use seen in national surveys of physician practices. Bethesda (Maryland), January 1, 2003.