



Study Suggests Calcium Buildup in Arteries May Increase Heart Risks in Women

Beverly Hills, CA (12/14/07)—Women are more likely to die from cardiovascular disease than all cancers combined. Coronary artery specific imaging is necessary to define heart attack risk in women. In a landmark study by the Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis (MESA) investigators published in the Archives in Internal Medicine, the Framingham risk score (FRS) was shown to be inaccurate in defining coronary heart disease (CHD) risk in many women. According to the MESA investigators, the FRS defines the CHD risk in 95% of women between the ages of 45-84 years as low. In these "low risk" patients, 32% were found to have **coronary artery calcium (CAC)** present on cardiac CT imaging. There was a 6-fold greater risk for a CHD event including sudden cardiac death and myocardial infarction in women with any CAC compared with women with no detectable coronary calcium in this low FRS population. According to **Dr. Norman Lepor**, co-director of cardiovascular imaging at **Westside Medical Imaging (WMI)** in Beverly Hills, "this study shows the limitations of the FRS which were developed in the late 1940's to assess the risk of CHD." The recently published **SHAPE guidelines** for cardiovascular screening recommends cardiovascular imaging (coronary calcium, **CT coronary angiography** or carotid intimal-medial thickness assessment) in women over the age of 55 and men over the age of 45 years with any cardiovascular risk factors (elevated LDL, low HDL-cholesterol, smoking history, hypertension, diabetes or family history of heart disease).

According to Dr. Lepor, the incidence of CHD in women continues to be underappreciated. It is imperative that primary care providers of women including general and family practitioners, internists and gynecologist make the appropriate referral of women for cardiovascular screening so that prevention therapies can be initiated before their patients suffer a cardiovascular event.

Westside Medical Imaging has been a pioneer in cardiovascular imaging and provides the full array of cardiovascular imaging services including 64 slice cardiac CT (CT coronary angiography and coronary calcium scoring), carotid ultrasound and IMT as well as stress evaluations. West Please contact us at 310-623-1150 or at

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