



Cardiovascular News Update

Dear Colleague,

Westside Medical Associates of Los Angeles (WMALA) in conjunction with Westside Medical Imaging (WMI) would like to provide you with this weekly update on important new developments in cardiovascular care. If you have any suggestions on subjects you would like covered, please let us know.

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Tim Russert's death may have been prevented with cardiac CTA

Tim Russert's untimely death has been particularly alarming owing to its sudden nature and occurring at a young age. Many have called their physicians with concerns. The age of 58 is young today, but it's not young for this kind of event. Physicians say that raising awareness of the prevalence of heart disease, and of the risks to both men and women, is a constant struggle. Russert's death, tragic as it was, may serve to educate physicians regarding the high risk that the average American male faces at this age, the shortcomings of stress testing and the utility of cardiac CTA as a screening technique for coronary artery disease. Westside Medical Imaging is a pioneer in cardiac imaging having developed special low radiation dose protocols to further enhance the safety of what already was a safe and important exam.

Ankle-brachial index improve accuracy of Framingham cardiovascular risk prediction and ideal to perform in primary care practice.

Taking the ankle brachial index (ABI) into account may improve the accuracy of Framingham cardiovascular risk prediction, according to an analysis published in the Journal of the American Medical Association. 24,955 men and 23,339 women were followed after an initial ABI measurement, and followed for 10 years. 4.4 percent of men with a normal ABI died compared to 18.7 percent of men with an abnormally low ABI. and for women were 12.6 percent for those with a low ABI, 4.1 percent for those with a normal ABI. A low ABI was associated with a doubled risk of death from any cause, cardiovascular death, and a major coronary event over the 10 years. Including the ABI in current risk factor assessments would mean reclassification of cardiovascular risk and change of the measures taken to prevent cardiovascular events for 19 percent of men and 36 percent of women. ABI is an easy examination to perform in the primary-care physician's office. Please contact either Dr. Norman Lepor or Hooman Madyoon if you have any interest in being trained to perform the ABI procedure.

Early detection saves lives. That's what we do. Find out more at Westside Medical Imaging's website at www.westsidemedimaging.com

Physicians should pay more attention to CV health of patients with HIV.

With antiretroviral therapy having turned HIV into a chronic disease, physicians need to start paying more attention to the cardiovascular health of their patients. One key piece of knowledge is that people living with HIV have an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, but what is not known is how much of that can be blamed on HIV and how much on the medications used to treat the virus.

Whatever the cause, studies show that living with HIV increases the risk of cardiovascular disease by about 70 percent.

Screen for arterial elasticity identifies hypertensive prone patients.

The diagnosis and management of hypertension in people over the age of 50 years should be based on systolic blood pressure (BP) according to a study published in *The Lancet*. The authors argue that systolic BP consistently rises with age, in contrast to diastolic BP, which rises up to around the age of 50 years and then falls leading to a higher prevalence of high systolic BP over age 50 years, whereas the high diastolic BP almost disappears. This has much to do with the loss of elasticity resulting from untreated diastolic hypertension. In order to simplify treatment strategies the clinical focus should be redirected exclusively onto systolic BP in people aged over 50 years. According to Dr. Norman Lepor of Westside Medical Associates of Los Angeles. "the use of the CVProfile as a screen for decreased arterial elasticity has allowed us to identify of patients early on who may be eligible for early treatment of borderline and pre-hypertensive condition."

Testosterone therapy may help improve cardiovascular risk factors in older hypogonadal men with metabolic syndrome.

Older hypogonadal men with metabolic syndrome had substantial improvement in cardiovascular risk factors with testosterone replacement therapy. Researchers looked at 95 hypogonadal men ages 34 to 69, all of whom had metabolic syndrome, which is associated with low testosterone. Patients received parenteral testosterone undecanoate for 12 months. The researchers found that improvement in lipid profile and a reduction in waist circumference accompanied a doubling of serum testosterone levels during 12 months of hormonal therapy.

Gene variation may explain why statins do not work well for some.

Statins may not work well on some people because of a gene variation according to a study published in the journal *Circulation*. An enzyme, known as HMG CoA Reductase is central to the production of cholesterol with statins reducing LDL-cholesterol by blocking this enzyme. Researchers analyzed differences in how the gene responsible for producing HMGCR was processed or spliced among participants enrolled in a cholesterol study. The researchers found the alternatively spliced and less active version of the HMGCR protein in many of the cell lines thereby explaining the variation of effects among individuals treated with statins.

Red yeast rice extract may reduce coronary events, deaths in patients with a previous heart attack.

Individuals who have had a heart attack may be able to reduce the risk of another attack by 45 percent by taking a purified extract of Chinese red yeast rice according to a study published in the *American Journal of Cardiology*. Researchers looked at 5,000 people in China who'd had a heart attack who were randomly selected to receive capsules containing the extract, Xuezhikang (XZK) or a placebo. The report noted that the XZK capsules contained a combination of lovastatin, lovastatin hydroxyl acid, ergosterol, and other components.

The primary endpoint of nonfatal heart attack and death from coronary heart disease occurred significantly less frequently in the XZK-treated group compared with the placebo-treated group, at 5.7 percent versus 10.4 percent ($p < 0.001$), over the study period. This translated into a 45 percent relative risk reduction. The XZK-treated patients had a significant 62 percent relative reduction in nonfatal MI, 32 percent reduction in fatal coronary events, a 30 percent reduction in cardiovascular mortality, and a 33 percent reduction in total mortality compared with those treated with placebo.

Heart attack may be becoming more common among pregnant women.

Heart attacks may be becoming more common among pregnant women, according to a study published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology. 103 cases of women who had heart attacks during their pregnancy were reviewed and found that women who had a heart attack in the 24 hours before or after delivery were twice as likely to die from the heart attack compared with women who had a heart attack before labor or in the first day to three months after delivery. They also found that 72 percent of the women who had heart attacks were older than 30, and one in four were older than 35. The researchers noted that one of the most common causes of heart attacks among pregnant women was coronary dissection.

Westside Medical Associates of Los Angeles (WMALA) and Westside Medical Imaging (WMI) are premier centers in cardiac diagnosis and treatment.

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