

Jefferson Cardiology Association Happenings

Overeating and Dementia

A recent study that appeared on the website for the *American Academy of Neurology* reported increased memory loss with increased caloric intake. Specifically older persons consuming more than 2143 calories per day experienced more memory loss than those eating less than 1500 calories per day. The study demonstrated that the more calories persons consumed the greater chances of developing mild cognitive impairment that can lead to Alzheimer's disease.

Specifically more than 1200 persons aged 70-89 were followed. Groups were separated by caloric intake. One group consumed under 1500 calories daily and a second group consumed between 1500 and 2100 calories daily. Those consuming over 2100 calories daily had double the risk for mild cognitive impairment.

Stem Cells Show Promise

A new study published in the February 14, 2012 issue of the British journal, *Lancet*, described a study evaluating use of stem cells to strengthen weakened heart muscle. Patients who had moderate to severe heart muscle weakening 2-4 weeks post heart attack were evaluated. Cardiac stem cells were developed from a tiny sample of normal heart muscle taken by biopsy. Patients were divided into one group receiving stems cells and the other did not receive stem cells. Those persons receiving stem cells received the prepared stems cells by a catheterization technique injecting the stem cells into the artery whose obstruction caused the recent heart attack. The patients in the two groups were then watched for 6 months.

Specifically, the groups were evaluated for new cardiac events or deaths.

After screening, 25 participants were selected. Of these, 17 received stem cells and 8 received standard medical care without stem cells. After six months there were no major adverse events in either group. Four patients in the stem cell treated group experienced less severe events compared to one in the control group. However, when evaluated by MRI, those treated with stem cells demonstrated reduced size of cardiac scar tissue and an increase in normal muscle mass as well as increased pumping capability. This study demonstrated an increase in healthy muscle and improved heart pumping in heart attack victims treated with stem cell therapy. This research shows promise and will require many additional studies before this therapy can be ready for widespread use.

Expert Recommendations about Geriatric Hypertension

There has been a recent publication of an expert consensus document regarding hypertension in the elderly. For persons 65-79 years of age, treatment should be started for systolic blood pressure over 140mm mercury or diastolic pressure above 90mm mercury. In persons over 80, the recommendation is to treat systolic blood pressure over 160mm mercury.

What medications are best suited to start treatment in the elderly? Diuretics, especially chlorthalidone, and calcium channel blockers have been found to reduce blood pressure and reduce cardiovascular events in the elderly. Beta blockers have had less significant bene-

fits in the elderly. Many elderly persons may need a combination of medications for effective blood pressure control. Such combinations may reduce side effects with maximum dosage of single agents. Also combination of an ACE inhibitor or ARB with a diuretic or calcium channel blocker may be quite effective. Persons with chronic kidney disease, heart failure or aortic aneurysms may benefit from greater blood pressure reduction than those with symptomatic coronary artery disease.

Persons who require 3 or more drugs are said to have resistant hypertension. Many persons with resistant hypertension may benefit from addition of an aldosterone antagonist. For better understanding of the medications involved, discussion with your physician can be helpful.

Staff News

Please join us in saying farewell to Valerie Rhall, our ultrasound technician. We thank Valerie for all of her hard work, dedication and expertise over the past 4 years of service. We wish her best of luck in her new endeavors. Val-

erie... "May the sun shine, all day long, everything go right, and nothing wrong. May those you love bring love back to you, and may all the wishes you wish come true!" We will miss you!!

With every goodbye, comes a hello. Please join us in welcoming our new ultrasound technician, Anna Pavlovskaya. We are excited to have Anna join us from UPMC and look forward to many years of continued dedication and commitment to the highest quality patient care. Welcome aboard Anna!

We would like to wish a very Happy Birthday to our employees celebrating this month, Mary Banaszak and Joanne Bondi and Anna Pavlovskaya. Hope you all have a great day! ☺

National Heart Month

February is national heart month. Remember to eat healthy, continue to exercise, stop smoking and consume alcohol only in moderation. Always remember that we will continue to offer a comprehensive array of services to meet our patients needs. Thank you for your continued support and confidence in our practice.



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