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## Jefferson Cardiology Association Happenings

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### News from the ACC

Each year this newsletter devotes space to clinical research trials just presented at the Annual Scientific Session of the American College of Cardiology. This is one of the foremost annual meetings in Cardiology drawing participants and research studies from all over the world. In this issue, research studies relevant to our patients will be described.

#### Niacin – Benefit or Harm

For many years, niacin has been prescribed to lower cholesterol, raise HDL, good cholesterol, and reduce triglycerides. Yet there really was no strong research evidence that niacin prevented cardiac events. Also many patients complained bitterly about niacin's unpleasant side effects.

The HEART PROTECTION STUDY 2 – THRIVE was designed to evaluate the benefits of niacin. A sustained release niacin was chosen with laropiprant, selected to reduce flushing due to niacin and compared to a placebo, or fake, pill. In this study 25,673 patients with documented atherosclerosis were selected to participate and all were on statin therapy. The baseline LDL cholesterol was 63mg/dl and the HDL was 44mg/dl. With treatment the LDL was reduced by 10mg/dl and the HDL increase was 6mg/dl.

However, cardiovascular death, myocardial infarction, stroke, coronary bypass and angioplasty procedures after almost 4 years were identical in the niacin and placebo groups. Yet, 25% of the niacin patients could not tolerate the drug compared with 17% of the placebo group.

In short, extended-release niacin did not reduce adverse cardiovascular events compared to placebo despite limited reduction of LDL and elevation of HDL cholesterol. Also, 25% of patients terminated niacin because of drug intolerance, with muscle damage most prominent in Chinese patients. This study is similar to another recently performed study demonstrating no benefit with niacin.

#### New Role for Statins

Patients undergoing heart catheterization may be at risk for kidney injury due to contrast material used to visualize structures. A study was done in a coronary care setting evaluating the benefit of Crestor in patients with no prior statin therapy. In patients given high dose Crestor in addition to standard treatment with IV fluids and mucomyst, there was far less kidney damage compared to those treated without Crestor.

#### Comparative Benefit of Bioabsorbable Stent

A study from Japan evaluated 3235 patients randomized to a conventional drug eluting stent and a bioabsorbable stent. The bioabsorbable stent will be completely absorbed by the patient's body in one year and will disappear. At one year, the results of both stents are similar. Researchers will watch these patients for at least 3 years to see if long-term outcomes are any better with bioabsorbable stents.

#### Device Replacing Blood Thinners in Atrial Fibrillation

Patients with atrial fibrillation at risk for stroke are recommended to take long term blood thinners. Is there an alternative to blood thinners in atrial fib-

rillation patients? Some controversy surrounded the presentation of the study involving the Watchman device designed to seal the left atrial appendage where clots develop in atrial fibrillation patients. A Boston Scientific employee leaked results of the study prematurely and the study was removed from the program.

Anyway, it was demonstrated that the Watchman device, inserted through the groin and passed into the left heart was noninferior to Coumadin in preventing clots sent to the body. However, the device had a small percentage of increased complications. It is possible that the FDA might approve this device for patients unable to take blood thinners

as this would be the first effective treatment for those patients to prevent damaging strokes and other devastating problems that may occur when the heart throws blood clots.

#### Staff News

We would like to wish Dr. Michael Nathanson and our Nuclear Technologist, Donna Jobe, a very happy birthday as they celebrate their special day this month.

Happy  St. Patrick's Day

#### One Pan Whiskey-Flavored Pork Chops

2/3 cup fat-free sour cream	4 (6oz) bone-in center-cut pork chops
1/2 cup water	1/4 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour	1/8 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt	1 teaspoon olive oil
1/2 teaspoon dried rubbed sage	1/2 cup chopped onion
1/4 teaspoon black pepper	1 (8oz) package sliced mushrooms
	1/2 cup Whiskey

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees
2. Combine first six ingredients in a small bowl
3. Sprinkle pork with 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/8 teaspoon pepper. Heat the oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add pork; sauté for 5 minutes on each side or until golden. Remove pork from pan. Add onion and mushrooms to pan; sauté 3 minutes. Carefully add whiskey to pan. Cook for 1 minute or until liquid almost evaporates. Stir sour cream mixture into pan. Return pork to pan; spoon sauce over pork.
4. Wrap handle of skillet with foil. Cover and bake at 300 degrees for 1 hour. Serve immediately.

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