

Are women at greater risk from angioplasty?

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Research will be reported at TCT 2007, the annual scientific symposium of the Cardiovascular Research Foundation (CRF), that demonstrates that early intervention saves lives in women who have a heart attack or unstable chest pain.

Responding to media reports of recent studies that emphasized the dangers of angioplasty in women compared to men, Dr. Alexandra J. Lansky, MD, Director of the Angiographic Core Laboratory and the Women's Cardiovascular Health Initiative at the Cardiovascular Research Foundation, said that the comparison to men overshadows the true benefit to women of early intervention.

“Recent news reports suggest that women do not fare as well as men following angioplasty. However, a cumulative view of the research on this topic overwhelmingly indicates that early intervention does benefit women, and in fact, prevents death and heart attacks,” said Alexandra J. Lansky, MD, Director of the Angiographic Core Laboratory and the Women's Cardiovascular Health Initiative at the Cardiovascular Research Foundation.

A national expert on the topic of interventional cardiology in women, Dr. Lansky is the medical director of www.hearthealthywomen.org and is the lead author of the American Heart Association Statement on Interventional Cardiology in Women.

“We should be comparing interventional strategies in women to other therapies in women, in order to determine whether or not they are

beneficial. The comparison to men is largely irrelevant,” Dr. Lansky said.

Dr. Lansky will be speaking on this and other topics pertaining to women’s heart health at TCT 2007 during the “Optimizing Care for Women with Cardiovascular Disease” lunchtime workshop on at Monday October 22 from 12:15-1:30 pm. TCT 2007 is being held at the Washington, DC Convention Center. Dr. Lansky is co-chairing this session with Alice Jacobs, MD former president of the American Heart Association.

In women with stable angina, a milder form of chest pain caused by narrowings in coronary arteries that are not immediately life threatening, PCI relieves chest pain symptoms better than medical therapy. In women who have more serious forms of the disease such as unstable chest pain, mild heart attack, or heart attack, PCI improves survival and reduces the chances of having a heart attack in the future.

Dr. Lansky said that women have a higher risk of bleeding complications than men, which may be caused by excessive doses of blood thinners given during the procedure; “but this is not cause enough to withhold life saving procedures from our female patients”.

However, she cautioned that recent studies comparing men to women – often looking at only a few hundred patients -- have been overemphasized and that as a result, the public has been receiving inaccurate messages.

“Everyone is confused: the media, physicians, and patients. Worse yet, women are now afraid to call for help when they need it most.”

“The message to the public should clearly be that early intervention benefits women with acute coronary syndromes (mild and severe heart

attacks). Women should not delay coming to the hospital if they suspect a heart attack and should not be afraid should they need an angioplasty - it could save their life” Dr. Lansky said.

Source: Cardiovascular Research Foundation

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