

Researchers uncover new advancements in cardiovascular medicine

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With the month of February designated as Heart Health Month, physician-researchers in the Division of Cardiology at the Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute (LA BioMed) – Dr. Matthew Budoff and Dr. Ronald Oudiz – continue to pave the way with their efforts to develop treatments and therapies for conditions affecting the heart, and to help improve overall heart health.

"Our research is aimed at achieving earlier detection of heart disease, especially in asymptomatic patients," said Dr. Budoff. "We've been very fortunate to have received such overwhelming support from different entities, which has enabled us to continue our research in cardiovascular medicine."

"As the nation focuses on [heart health](#) this month, we continue to aggressively find ways to decrease the chances of [heart failure](#) – and subsequently death - for patients with pulmonary hypertension, a rare disorder that results in progressive heart failure and death," said Dr. Oudiz.

Dr. Budoff has been a thought leader in coronary artery calcium and computed tomographic (CT) angiography over the last 20 years. Dr. Budoff's expertise ranges from coronary artery calcium and CT angiography, to venous imaging, aortic imaging, and ventricular and atrial imaging. He and his staff have worked closely with partners in device manufacturing to assess the adequacy of different techniques, acting as a core lab for studies including heart failure devices, mitral

valve and aortic valve repair techniques and devices, pacemakers (both wireless and biventricular), and stents (coronary and aortic), among others.

Currently, Dr. Budoff and his staff are working on a study to assess whether using a garlic extract can have a significant impact on the buildup of plaque, which has been known to cause heart attacks. They are also working on several ongoing studies looking at interactions of testosterone, a study on diabetes, and a study looking at heart disease among persons with lung disease. Additionally, Dr. Budoff serves as Director of Cardiac CT at the Diagnostic and Wellness Imaging Center, an accredited center of excellence that serves as the exclusive cardiac imaging center for fire and police departments in Los Angeles County, and where experts in medicine come for their cardiac imaging.

Dr. Oudiz is a pioneer in the field of pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH), having received the 2011 Award for Excellence from the Pulmonary Hypertension Association for his dedication to find new ways to treat this often fatal disease. PAH is an increase in blood pressure in the pulmonary artery, pulmonary vein or pulmonary capillaries that can lead to shortness of breath, dizziness or fainting. It is a rare form of [pulmonary hypertension](#) (PH) that affects between 500-1,000 people each year - or 1 or 2 people out of one million people worldwide per year - most of whom are young women between the ages of 20 and 40.

Currently, Dr. Oudiz is a member of a steering committee for a study that is looking at a new heart failure drug made by Bayer, riociguat, that hopes to further improve symptoms beyond usual care. The study is designed to assess whether increasing oral doses of riociguat are safe and improve the well-being, symptoms, and outcome in patients with PH associated with heart failure due to left ventricular systolic dysfunction. He and his colleagues are also involved in another study of a drug for PH called prostacyclin, one of the most potent drugs for PH. This research is

focused on finding a way for patients to take prostacyclin in an oral form, where currently prostacyclin is given via continuous infusion (injection) or inhalation.

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