



ASE American Society of
Echocardiography
Heart & Circulation Ultrasound Specialists

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NEW HEART ULTRASOUND RESEARCH SHOWS PROMISE FOR DIAGNOSING AND
TREATING NATION'S #1 KILLER**

*American Society of Echocardiography releases groundbreaking research findings at 21st
Annual Scientific Sessions*

San Diego – JUNE 14, 2009 – Research released today at the American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) 21st Annual Scientific Sessions unveiled findings that will have a significant impact on the diagnosis and treatment of heart disease and the application of echocardiography in the future.

The four-day-long event brings together 2,300 of the world's leading researchers in cardiovascular medicine and echocardiography under one roof at the San Diego Convention Center.

One highlighted study involves a non-invasive ultrasound technique that detects signs of early heart muscle damage in breast cancer patients receiving chemotherapy.

“For many patients, it’s not necessarily the cancer that kills them, but rather the side effects of chemotherapy treatments,” said Dr. Heloisa Sawaya of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School. “Our findings will aid oncologists in their evaluation of heart muscle damage caused by chemo after three months of treatment—helping them to better assist patients in evaluating the treatment options available, potentially decreasing the incidence of cardiotoxicity and its associated morbidity and mortality.”

The researchers noted that as breast cancer survival increases cardiotoxicity, or heart muscle damage, is becoming a more serious issue, as it may result in death.

Researchers found two parameters, cardiac troponin plasma concentrations and heart ultrasound measured peak longitudinal strain, are more sensitive factors to determining incidences of cardiotoxicity. After studying 43 breast cancer patients, findings showed that those patients who had a decrease in the heart ultrasound-measured peak longitudinal strain of more than 10 percent from their baseline, or who had an elevation in cardiac troponin after three months of chemo treatment, had a 9-fold increase in risk of cardiotoxicity at six months.

Another key study presented at the Scientific Sessions outlined findings that will help heart valve surgical candidates better predict their risk of dying following surgery. Researchers discovered that current models used to predict heart valve surgery mortality are based on clinical preoperative risk factors and observation of left ventricular function. However, right ventricular (RV) parameters are currently not included in the evaluation. Researchers analyzed the preoperative echocardiograms of 258 patients and found RV parameters to be independent predictors of long-term mortality.

“The findings will help caregivers, patients and families make educated decisions about the appropriate timing of heart surgery,” said Dr. Venkatesh Y. Anjan of Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine, a lead author of the study. “Looking at the right heart using an echocardiogram or heart ultrasound gives additional information, allowing for a more thorough assessment of the risk associated with performing mitral valve surgery.”

Other headlines from the 2010 ASE Scientific Sessions include:

- A Major Study Proves More Highly Trained Physicians Can Prevent Superfluous Health Care Costs – *The study found discrepancies in heart exams led to additional, costly testing including invasive heart procedures in five patients*
- Web-Based Tool Developed to Track Appropriate Ordering of Heart Ultrasounds Exams – *Preventing unnecessary exams could result in saving significant health care dollars*
- Study Finds Screening Heart and Circulation Ultrasound Can Better Determine Risk of Heart Disease in Obese Women— *Heart and circulation ultrasound trumps current predictors of heart disease among women with known metabolic risk factors or obesity*
- Study Reveals Successful and Noninvasive Techniques to Treat Blood Clots-- *Pediatric and small adult patients among the many to benefit from findings*

To view the full text of the press releases and study abstracts, please visit SeeMyHeart.org.

The American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) is a professional organization of physicians, cardiac sonographers, nurses and scientists involved in echocardiography, the use of ultrasound to image the heart and cardiovascular system. The organization was founded in 1975 and is the largest international organization for cardiovascular ultrasound imaging. For more information on ASE, visit www.asecho.org or ASE’s public information site, www.SeeMyHeart.org.

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