



ASE American Society of
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**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*

San Diego, CA – JUNE 14, 2010 – Despite being identified as low risk for heart disease by traditional risk assessment tools, women who are obese or have the metabolic syndrome (two or more of the following: abdominal obesity, insulin resistance, low HDL or good cholesterol, high triglycerides, high blood pressure), can benefit from a heart and circulation ultrasound exam to more accurately determine their risk, according to a study presented at the 21st Annual Scientific Sessions of the American Society of Echocardiography (ASE).

Obesity and the metabolic syndrome are increasingly recognized as being associated with developing heart disease, stroke, circulation disorders, and diabetes, while various heart and circulation ultrasound measures have also recently been demonstrated to portend worse cardiovascular outcomes.

Researchers conducted heart and circulation ultrasounds on 51 women with two or more cardiovascular risk factors. Of the 43 women who had complete data, all had a traditional Framingham risk score of less than 10 percent, placing them in the "low risk" category for cardiovascular disease. However, 74 percent of the women had the metabolic syndrome, and 67 percent were obese. Among women with the metabolic syndrome, heart and circulation ultrasound showed significant cholesterol plaque build-up in the arteries in their neck, abnormal increased stiffness of their heart muscle, and/or abnormal increased size of the left atrium heart chamber in 75 percent of the study participants. When women with obesity were considered alone, 45 percent had significant cholesterol plaque build-up in the arteries of the neck.

"We found that screening women with obesity or the metabolic syndrome with heart and circulation ultrasound may help to further risk stratify these patients and direct risk reduction strategies, particularly in women who are low risk by traditional Framingham risk assessment tools," said Dr. Danya L. Dinwoodey of Massachusetts General Hospital, a lead author of the study. "The additional data provided by ultrasound can help to determine how aggressively to intervene with treatment—ultimately perhaps saving a life."

The study was conducted by Danya L. Dinwoodey, Lauren G. Gilstrap, Donna M. Slicis, Donna Peltier-Saxe, Linda C. Hemphill and Malissa J. Wood of Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, Mass.; Harvard Medical School in Boston, Mass.; and Community Health Associates, Massachusetts General Hospital in Revere, Mass.

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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