

for TUFTS MEDICINE

Preventing a second heart attack

The blood-thinner warfarin in combination with aspirin cuts the risk of a second heart attack or stroke in half but may increase major bleeding, according to a study led by **Michael B. Rothberg**, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor of medicine and a member of the clinical faculty at Baystate Medical Center. The research, published in the August 16 issue of *Annals of Internal Medicine*, analyzed data from ten randomized trials conducted between 1990 and 2004. Comparing the outcomes for nearly 6,000 heart attack patients, Rothberg's group demonstrated that the use of warfarin plus aspirin decreases the risk of stroke or second heart attack. Warfarin did not cut the risk of death, however.

While the findings show many heart attack survivors could benefit from the aspirin-plus-warfarin therapy, the researchers advise limiting the drugs' use in patients at risk for excess bleeding, such as those with diabetes or congestive heart failure. Among Rothberg's collaborators were **Carmel A. Celestin**, M.D., clinical instructor of medicine, and **James R. Cook**, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor of medicine, both at Baystate.

Early puberty is not a predictor of adult obesity, study finds

Overweight girls reach puberty earlier than their slimmer counterparts, and they are also more likely to be overweight adults. But the early onset of menstruation is not a risk factor for adult obesity as previously thought, according to **Aviva Must**, Ph.D., associate professor of public health and family medicine at the School of Medicine.

The findings, published in the September issue of *Pediatrics*, undermine the practice of medically delaying puberty as a means of preventing obesity.

After coming across the Newton Girls Study, which followed 700 girls in the 1960s from before the onset of menstruation through their 20th period, Must followed up with 450 of the now-adult participants, 37 percent of whom are now overweight or obese. The overweight girls were more likely to have had their first periods before age 12. And those who were overweight before their first periods were more than seven times likely to be overweight women than their lighter cohorts were.

But when Must looked at the 20 percent of girls who began menstruating before age 12, there was no evidence that the early onset of puberty influenced adult body weight. Must said her findings emphasize the need to address obesity issues before the onset of puberty.

HERE & THERE

James P. Morgan, M.D., Ph.D., has been appointed chief of cardiovascular medicine at Caritas St. Elizabeth's Medical Center. He will also direct the Cardiac Center of the Caritas Christi Health Care System. He succeeds **Bernard D. Kosowsky**, M.D., professor of medicine.

Four Massachusetts physician-poets will read their work at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, September 24, at Cary Memorial Library, 1874 Massachusetts Ave., Lexington.

Ronald Pies, M.D., clinical professor of psychiatry, will be reading from his recently released book of poems, *Creeping Thyme*.

Allan H. Ropper, M.D., professor and chair of neurology and chief of neurology at Caritas St. Elizabeth's Medical Center, has been appointed an associate editor of *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

Ananda Roy, Ph.D., associate professor of pathology, received the Dean's Outstanding Mentor Award, which honors a Sackler School faculty member with a commitment to mentoring graduate students.

Dr. Brian J.G. Pereira, M.D., professor of medicine, has received a Distinguished Service Award from the National Kidney Foundation for "noteworthy contributions of national significance." Pereira is president-elect of the National Kidney Foundation.

REMEMBERING ABBY SHEVITZ

Abby H. Shevitz, M.D., assistant professor of public health and family medicine, died of lung cancer on July 21. She was 46. A faculty member since 1996, Shevitz's colleagues remember her as a skilled and compassionate clinician. Her research focused on the nutritional complications associated with HIV. Her early work found that women were contracting HIV at a much earlier age than men—a discovery that had a significant impact on testing and prevention protocols.

Last year, Shevitz was named a "Woman Who Dared" by the Jewish Women's Archive.

She is survived by her husband, **Ronenn Roubenoff**, M.D., adjunct associate professor of medicine and adjunct professor of nutrition, and her son, Ethan. A memorial service was held September 14 at Tufts-NEMC.

A NEW CHAIR OF UROLOGY

Gennaro A. Carpinito, M.D., has been appointed urologist-in-chief at Tufts-NEMC and chair of urology at the School of Medicine. Carpinito joined Tufts-NEMC two years ago as chief of adult urology. Carpinito is a pioneer in the development of immunotherapy used to manage difficult-to-treat cancers. Ultimately, this research resulted in the development of a novel treatment for renal cell carcinoma called Autolympocyte Therapy (ALT). His research also assisted in the development of non-invasive tests for the early detection and monitoring of bladder cancer. One such test has been approved by the FDA and is currently used around the world.

Zucker grants honor women scholars

Ten Tufts researchers were awarded grants by the Natalie V. Zucker Research Center for Women Scholars at the School of Medicine. In the School of Medicine, **Kakoli Bose**, Ph.D., a postdoc in the biochemistry department, will attend a workshop on protein NMR spectrometry to enhance her work with papilloma virus, and microbiologist **Brigid M. Davis**, Ph.D., will investigate and characterize a specific RNA type in the bacterium that causes cholera. At Tufts-New England Medical Center, **Zhongyan Wang**, Ph.D., M.D., will investigate retinal degeneration; **Kari E.R. Roberts**, M.D., will investigate sex hormones and hypertension; **Katrina Van Dellen**, Ph.D., will study *V. cholerae*, the germ that causes infectious diarrhea; geneticist **Mary Lee Tjoa**, Ph.D., secured a travel grant to a conference on circulating nucleic acids in plasma and serum; and **Inga Peter**, Ph.D., will study the genetics of estrogen and dementia. Lahey Clinic's **Jennifer Verbese**, M.D., will document hepatic regeneration and operative outcomes after adult living donor liver transplantation. As noted in the last issue, two members of the clinical faculty at Caritas St. Elizabeth's Medical Center, **Yun Wang**, M.D., Ph.D., and **Mary C. Perianayagam**, Ph.D., were also among the recipients of Zucker grants.

St. E's opens cancer biology center

Lynn Hlatky, Ph.D., has been appointed the founding director of the Center of Cancer Systems Biology at Caritas St. Elizabeth's Medical Center. Formerly of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard Medical School, Hlatky is internationally recognized for her research in tumor growth dynamics, tumor microenvironment, DNA damage and chromosome aberrations, radiation biology and tumor angiogenesis. The new center will take a similarly broad-based approach to cancer research, maintaining a sharp focus on both cancer biology and treatment optimization.

Hlatky, who earned her Ph.D. in biophysics from the University of California at Berkeley, has received numerous awards for her research and serves on international scientific granting committees. She is assembling a research group that will be supported by grants exceeding \$12 million in funding over the next five years. Recently, she received a highly competitive \$10 million award from NASA to establish and direct a multi-institutional NASA Specialized Center of Research to study solid-tumor carcinogenesis.

FEEDBACK

The *Dean's Letter for Tufts Medicine* is published nine times a year by the Office of the Dean of Tufts University School of Medicine. We welcome comments and story ideas. Contact Editor Jacqueline Mitchell at jacqueline.mitchell@tufts.edu or 617.636.3602.

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