

MaineHealth

Learning Community

Heart Month News: Did you Know?

February is Heart Month ~ the perfect time to focus on how to decrease cardiovascular disease risk factors and deaths in your patient population. Did you know that...

- A recent study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association notes that **one extra hour of sleep per night is associated with a 33% reduction in the development of coronary artery calcification (CAC)**. Taking a new look at data pulled from the Coronary Artery Risk Development in Young Adults study, authors were able to objectively link measured sleep duration to a marker for heart disease. The benefit of **one hour of additional sleep was comparable to the gains from lowering systolic blood pressure by 16.5 mmHg**, notes Dr. Diane Lauderdale, senior author.

As this was an observational study, **results will need to be confirmed in additional populations**; however, Dr. Lauderdale notes that **“although this single study does not prove that short sleep leads to CAD, it is safe to recommend at least six hours of sleep at night” to patients.** The full article can be assessed online at theheart.org (<http://www.theheart.org/article/930643.do>).

- Published in the November 26, 2008 edition of the Journal of the American Medical Association, the Heart and Soul Study found that **health behaviors, not complex biological processes, largely account for the increased risk of cardiac events in people with depression**. Dr. Mary Wooley noted that depressed patients were less likely to take their medications as prescribed, less likely to exercise, and more likely to smoke. She notes that **physical inactivity, in particular, likely accounts for most of the risk**. Once those behaviors were accounted for, “the association between depression and CVD went away.”

Although more studies comparing the use of antidepressants and exercise interventions in improving cardiovascular risk factors are needed, the Heart and Soul study suggests what we already know – many CVD risk factors are modifiable through behavioral interventions. We also know that it can be very challenging to help patients change behaviors, especially depressed patients who may be less motivated to try new things such as exercise.

For a full link to this article, please visit HeartWire (<http://www.theheart.org/article/924331.do>). For more ideas on how to help guide patients through behavior change, check out the MaineHealth Cardiovascular Disease Information for Patients and Families Booklet available on the CVH Program’s website (www.mainehealth.org/cvh) or by calling 541-7558.