

**SOUTH ASIAN HEART CENTER PHYSICIAN SYMPOSIUM  
CAPS A YEAR OF PROGRESS**

**Speakers present “state of the epidemic,” successful screening and  
prevention methods and research findings**

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA, September 12, 2007—Capping its first year of successful operations, the South Asian Heart Center at El Camino Hospital in Mountain View, California presented “Strategies and Solutions Symposium: Coronary Artery Disease Pandemic in South Asians,” a symposium for health care professionals that focused on the high incidence and prevalence of coronary artery disease and its risk factors in South Asians. The conference provided an in-depth review of lipid physiology as well as an extensive discussion of diagnosis, pharmacotherapy and lifestyle interventions to decrease the risk of CAD.

Three hundred health care professionals registered for the event which took place on Saturday, September 8 at the Doubletree Hotel in San Jose, CA. The program included presentations on heart disease by several acclaimed practicing cardiologists, lipidologists, and world-renowned scientists, as well as findings of the first year of operation of the Center.

The complimentary CME event, hosted by El Camino Hospital is the first-ever non-profit, community hospital-planned symposium addressing the unique and specific heart health risks of South Asians.



"This was an important opportunity—and a key part of our mission—to help make the medical community aware of the unique risks and challenges of heart disease within the South Asian population," said Dr. César Molina, Medical Director of the South Asian Heart Center. "After analyzing the first year of the data collected, we are seeing solid evidence that the traditional approach to assessing heart disease risk in this population must be improved. Beyond taking into account high blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol, smoking, and obesity—which certainly can play a causative role for this group—there are other critical emerging risk factors that physicians must evaluate in this population."

Among the session leaders and presenters were Dr. Kanu Chatterjee, the Ernest Gallo Distinguished Professor of Medicine at UCSF Medical Center; Dr. Robert Superko, leading expert and teacher in lipid disorders and Chairman, Preventive Cardiology, Fuqua Heart Center / Piedmont Hospital, Atlanta, Dr. Prediman K. (PK) Shah, internationally renowned cardiologist, scientist and Director of the Division of Cardiology and the Atherosclerosis Research Center at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, and Dr. Enas A. Enas, one of the world's leading investigators on heart disease in South Asians and Director of the CADI Research Foundation, Chicago.

Sessions focused on the dimensions of the epidemic, the emerging data on its nature and causes, better screening methods and evidence-based primary and secondary prevention including lifestyle and medications. A number of specific cases were presented and discussed by a distinguished panel including El Camino Hospital cardiologists Dr. Dominick Curtola, Dr. James Joye, Dr. Chad Rammohan and Dr. Neal Scott.

Dr. Mintu Turakhia, a cardiologist, electrophysiologist, and epidemiologist at the University of California San Francisco, and Chair of Research for the Center, presented the much-anticipated data from 800 participants screened during the first 17 months of the Center's operation.

He set the stage by saying, “Overall, participants coming to the center reflect precisely the Silicon Valley South Asian population. They were young, highly educated, and two-thirds were male. And the rates of risk factors, even in individuals under the age of 40 were extraordinarily high.”

Highlights of the data included:

- The mean age of participants was  $44 \pm 11$  years
- Most participants were born on the Indian subcontinent
- Nearly a quarter (23 percent) had hypertension
- Ten percent had diabetes
- 36 percent had a family history of cardiovascular disease
- 51 percent were overweight
- 19 percent had an elevated fasting blood sugar reflecting insulin resistance or frank diabetes
- There were alarming rates of cholesterol disorders

“Arguably, the most potent risk factor in South Asians is low HDL levels,” said Dr. Turakhia. “We found low HDL in an astonishing 45 percent of participants, and rates were similar in men and women. HDL-2b, an anti-atherogenic good cholesterol sub-particle, was low in 27 percent of participants, most of whom already had low HDL. However, HDL-2b was also low in 7% of patients with normal HDL levels, which may suggest that these patients are at risk despite HDL levels that are normal based on established cut-off values. As a result, particle sub-typing may add prognostic value in specific clinical scenarios unless more aggressive HDL cutpoints are used.”

The South Asian Heart Center data also reveals high rates of the metabolic syndrome, a potent combination of conditions linked to blood vessel inflammation, atherosclerosis, and diabetes, according to Dr. Turakhia. Some 15 percent of men and 9 percent of

women had the metabolic syndrome and an alarming 29% of men and 16% of women were well on their way toward developing it — just one criteria short.

“It is unequivocally clear that risk stratification and treatment of the Bay Area South Asian population is an unmet clinical need,” Dr. Turakhia concluded.

Dr. Molina emphasized the importance of earlier screening.

“One of the most important differences in our approach is the age at which we’re screening individuals in our program,” said Dr. Molina. “More than half of heart attacks among South Asians occur by age 50, and a quarter below the age of 40, yet traditional guidelines for risk stratification weight age as one of the most important factors, thereby missing the high risk for premature CAD in this population.. “The best available data in South Asians indicates that individuals who are traditionally considered to be at a lower risk—such as vegetarians, non smokers and physically active individuals—may still be at risk for premature CAD. That’s why it is critical that we change the thinking not only of physicians, but of the South Asian community that is so profoundly affected.”

By 2010, it is estimated that South Asians—who trace their ancestry from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka—will bear 60 percent of the world’s heart disease burden. By 2015 over 60 million Indians in South Asia will suffer from coronary artery disease at the current rate. The South Asian Heart Center is the first non-profit organization in the world devoted to combating this worldwide epidemic.

With input from a community-wide task force of cardiologists, internists, nurses, nutritionists and family physicians, the Center developed a comprehensive health risk assessment factoring in family history, medical history, diet, activity, stress and advanced lipid and metabolic testing.

“The in-depth assessment has been critical,” said Dr. Molina, “because it permits our participants the opportunity to address specific issues through changes in their diet, exercise routine and even meditation.”

The South Asian Heart Center’s program helps make that happen. It provides each participant with a comprehensive risk assessment along with personalized recommendations for prevention, referrals to wellness resources that help participants make long term positive lifestyle changes, and periodic re-checks to help keep participants motivated. Intense in-person case management is used to ensure that patients stay and succeed on their heart-health management program which is provided free of charge.

Since the launch of the South Asian Heart Center at El Camino Hospital, more than 400 physicians have attended its symposia, lectures and workshops. Other health care providers also have announced plans for programs focused on the South Asian population’s unique health risks. South Asians constitute three percent of the South Bay population.

“We’re happy to have raised awareness and spurred others to take action, too,” Dr. Molina said. “We hope our findings will spur everyone to look carefully at how to approach the South Asian heart disease epidemic effectively.”

For more information about the South Asian Heart Center Symposium, go to <http://www.southasianheartcenter.org/physicians/symposium.html>

### **About the South Asian Heart Center**

The Center is made possible through the generosity of the community, and through the generous in-kind contributions of El Camino Hospital. To learn more, to schedule a

screening, to volunteer time, or donate to the center, visit the web site at [www.southasianheartcenter.org](http://www.southasianheartcenter.org) or call (650) 940-SAHC (7242).

### **About El Camino Hospital**

Located on a 41-acre campus in the heart of Silicon Valley, El Camino Hospital serves residents in the El Camino Hospital District – Mountain View, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, and portions of Sunnyvale and Palo Alto – as well as those in surrounding communities. Established in 1961, this non-profit, locally controlled community-based hospital has delivered the highest level of medical services to the community for more than four decades. Recognized both locally and nationally for its quality of care and high patient, physician and employee satisfaction scores, ECH is the only hospital in the Bay Area and one of only six in California that has been designated as a nursing magnet hospital by the American Nursing Credentialing Center.

To learn more about ECH and its services, visit our web site at [www.elcaminohospital.org](http://www.elcaminohospital.org). For a physician referral, visit our web site or call the El Camino Health Line at (800) 216-5556.

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