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Cardiovascular News Update

Dear Colleague,

Westside Medical Associates of Los Angeles (WMALA) in conjunction with Westside Medical Imaging (WMI) would like to provide you with this weekly update on important new developments in cardiovascular care.

Study suggests statins may help prevent heart attacks after treatment ceases. Statins "help prevent heart attacks for at least a decade after people stop taking them," according to research reported in Thursday's *New England Journal of Medicine*. That men taking the drug Pravachol (pravastatin) for five years substantially lowered their risk of heart attack and death from heart disease." Study participants were tracked "for another 10 years after most stopped taking" Pravachol. When "that group was compared with a group" of participants who received a placebo "during the five year study," the researchers found "a 25 percent lower risk of heart attack or death from heart disease among those in the statin group."..

Research suggests stored blood may lack nitric oxide possibly explaining why transfusions may not be as good as you think. The stored blood given to millions of people every year may lack" nitric oxide, as this component starts "breaking down as soon as blood goes into storage," according to studies reported in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. Some physicians "have become increasingly concerned about levels of heart attack and stroke in patients receiving transfusions." Dr. Stamler of Duke University, said, "The issue of transfused blood being potentially harmful to patients is one of the biggest problems facing American medicine., Dr. McMahon, also of Duke University, said, "We were surprised at how quickly with nitric oxide depletion observed within the first three hours."

Check thyroid function in heart failure patients as study suggests subclinical hypothyroidism may increase risk of heart failure. Asymptomatic patients with thyroid stimulating hormone levels of 10 mU/L or higher were at almost twice the risk of heart failure as patients without subclinical hypothyroidism, found a large cohort study." Doug Bauer, M.D., of the University of California at San Francisco, said, "This risk is comparable to that from diabetes and hypertension." He added that the "study results suggested that treating subclinical hypothyroidism could reduce heart failure risk."

Westside Medical Associates of Los Angeles (WMALA) and Westside Medical Imaging (WMI) are premier centers in cardiac diagnosis and treatment.

Please feel free to contact
Norman Lepor MD, Hooman Madyoon MD or Ivor Geft MD
at (310) 289-9955
or check our website at www.westsidemedimaging.com.

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