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## **ALLIANCE FOR AGING RESEARCH LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF AORTIC STENOSIS**

### **Survey Reveals Doctors, Patients Lack Information about Heart Condition**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Following a survey that shows doctors and patients lack information about aortic stenosis (AS), a common age-related heart condition, the not-for-profit Alliance for Aging Research is launching a campaign to educate physicians about this under-diagnosed and under-treated condition.

Aortic stenosis is the abnormal narrowing of the aortic valve which obstructs blood flow from the heart to the arteries. If left untreated AS can lead to heart disease and sudden death. Today nearly one in four Americans age 65 and older has AS. With the aging of the population, the number of cases will increase.

According to the Alliance for Aging Research survey, nine out of 10 doctors who commonly treat older people think their patients need more information about AS, particularly regarding symptoms and treatments. In addition, three-quarters of physicians want more information themselves, especially about treatment options.

Many common symptoms of AS, including dizziness, fatigue and heart palpitations, may not appear in older adults or may be assumed to be part of normal aging. That is why it is important for doctors to examine for AS. However, 40 percent of the doctors surveyed do not specifically check for AS during regular check-ups. Risk of sudden death increases dramatically at the onset of symptoms, so early diagnosis is critical. Aortic valve replacement (AVR) surgery is the most effective treatment once symptoms develop, but the Alliance survey revealed that doctors don't always recommend it for older patients due in part to an incorrect belief that age is a contraindication to surgery.

“Aortic stenosis is a treatable disease that often goes untreated because of lack of knowledge about the condition,” said Daniel Perry, executive director of the Alliance. “There is a misconception among some doctors and patients that surgery shouldn't be performed on older adults, when in fact AVR surgery can increase survival and improve quality of life for people of all ages.”

The survey was conducted for the Alliance by the opinion research firm of Beldon Russonello & Stewart. Some 300 general practitioners, internists and geriatricians, randomly selected from the Harris Interactive Physician Panel participated in a web-based survey.

Educational materials include a brochure entitled “Aortic Stenosis in Seniors: A Physician’s Guide” and a video featuring Dr. Jamie Brown, Director of Cardiac Transplantation and Assist Devices at the University of Maryland Medical Center. The video and brochure provide guidelines for diagnosing and determining the severity of the condition, choosing the correct treatment for each patient, and talking to patients—are available free of charge on the Alliance’s website at [www.agingresearch.org](http://www.agingresearch.org).

Edward Lifesciences is providing support for the campaign through an unrestricted educational grant.

To learn more about this campaign, visit [www.agingresearch.org](http://www.agingresearch.org).

*Founded in 1986, the Alliance for Aging Research is a nonprofit, independent organization dedicated to improving the health and independence of aging Americans through public and private funding of medical research and geriatric education. The Alliance combines the interests of top scientists, public officials, business executives and foundation leaders to promote a greater national investment in research and new technologies that will prepare our nation for the coming senior boom, and improve the quality of life for today’s older generation.*

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