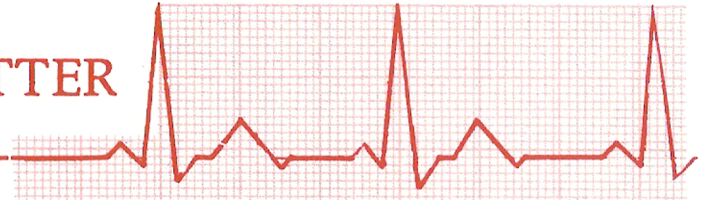




Pacific HeartBeat

NEWSLETTER



July 2012

President's Report By Alfred Buchi

Our dedicated golfers on the board of directors have again put in a lot of hard work to bring us the yearly golf tournament. It is the volunteers who make our organization a success. Being a hospital visitor, or a director on the board, or simply a member of the Pacific Open Heart Association, helps us in moving forward and continuing with our support for all open-heart surgery patients. Marjorie Blair, a long time director and visitor trainer, has taken a medical leave. We wish her well in her recovery. If you are interested in becoming involved with POHA, do not hesitate to contact us. Wishing you all a wonderful summer.

Quit Playing (Number) Games With My Heart?



James McCormack, a professor with the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver and an expert advisor with EvidenceNetwork.ca

Have you been told by your health care professional that you have high blood pressure, high cholesterol or type 2 diabetes and you need to do something to improve your "numbers?" If so, it is likely their recommendations were based on national clinical practice guidelines written by experts in cardiovascular

health.

On the face of it, following guidelines seems a very reasonable approach. What could be the problem?

Well, a recent evaluation of cardiovascular patient guidelines in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* reveals that only 12 per cent of the recommendations are based on randomized controlled trials (the highest level of evidence). In contrast, 54 per cent of the recommendations are based purely on opinion and consensus.

Here's what we know well: Evidence from the last 30 years provides pretty solid support that lowering what would be considered higher levels of blood pressure (above 160 to 170 mmHg systolic), especially in type 2 diabetics, reduces cardiovascular events (heart attacks and strokes) to what many, if not most, would consider a clinically important degree. Statins

reduce the chance of cardiovascular events and one can control symptoms and improve outcomes when very high glucose levels are reduced.

But the evidence for reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease is not nearly as impressive or definitive when it comes to aggressively getting numbers below the commonly recommended lower number thresholds for blood pressure (<140/90 mmHg), diabetes (hemoglobin A1c <7 per cent) and cholesterol (LDL < 2.0 mmol/L). This is important because reducing the chance of cardiovascular events is the only reason we aim to change numbers in the first place.

Given this, it is unfortunate how many patients and their families worry and become obsessed with these quite arbitrary breakpoints. A recent *British Medical Journal* analysis goes so far to say that our idolizing obsession with changing patient numbers is "damaging patient care."

Beware the spin

One of the more tricky aspects surrounding cardiovascular disease numbers is how the magnitude of the cardiovascular benefits is typically presented.

A news report may, for example, state that a five-year study of a drug has shown it reduces cardiovascular disease by 25 per cent. Sounds convincing, right?

While this number may be technically correct, it's actually misleading.

That's because a typical study result may find those patients who go without medication over five years have an eight per cent chance of a cardiovascular event, whereas if they take the medication in question, their chance decreases to six per cent.

Mathematically, it is true that six is 25 per cent lower than eight (a "relative" difference). But the number that matters -- the "absolute" number -- is actually two per cent (eight minus six).

In other words, two per cent of people obtained a benefit, but 98 per cent of people on the medication received no cardiovascular benefit. The benefit is hopefully greater over a longer period of time, but studies rarely extend beyond five years.

In the case of statins, a class of drugs routinely prescribed to lower cholesterol, evidence shows the absolute difference in cardiovascular events achieved over a five-year period is roughly one to 1.5% in patients who have never had a heart attack or a stroke. Other popular drugs (ezetimibe, niacin, fibrates) that lower cholesterol numbers have not been shown to consistently reduce the chance of cardiovascular events.

Most blood pressure drugs (but not atenolol or doxazosin), according to JAMA, when used in patients with systolic blood pressures around 160 to 170 mmHg, lead to a difference in cardiovascular events of around two to five per cent, and there

is a five to eight per cent reduction when a drug called metformin is used in newly diagnosed diabetics.

Interestingly, other drugs used to lower blood glucose in diabetes have either been shown to have less of a benefit, no benefit at all or have not been studied to see if they reduce the chance of cardiovascular disease. And we can't forget the possible side effects and the costs for medications, which patients must consider. Since the majority of patients will not get a cardiovascular benefit from these medications, any side effects really become unacceptable.

Informed decision making

Medical guidelines are oddly silent on patient preferences. A recent look at five main Canadian cardiovascular guidelines reveals that only 99 of the 90,000 words in the documents addresses patients' values and preferences.

So, given all of this, what's a patient to do?

Let's forget the numbers for a moment and focus on what patients can and should do for themselves. The best available data show that stopping smoking, eating in moderation (the Mediterranean diet has the best evidence), and being active are the three most important things a person can do to reduce cardiovascular risk (even if these things don't change your numbers).

Patients should ask their doctors, if a medication is recommended, whether that specific drug has been shown in well-designed clinical trials to reduce cardiovascular disease, and if so, by how much (in absolute numbers). They should also always have a discussion about the possible side effects and costs of any medication.

The bottom line: The goal is reducing the chance of cardiovascular disease not just lowering numbers.

In the end, a health care provider should support the patient decision regardless of the path the patient chooses and not make them feel guilty if they don't blindly follow the latest guideline recommendations.

The professional opinions expressed here are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Pacific Open Heart Association.

2012 Annual General Meeting

The Pacific Open Heart Annual General Meeting was held February 11th 2012, at the Unitarian Church in Vancouver.

Sandra Lauck, a Clinical Nurse Specialist at St. Paul's, was the guest speaker. Her topic was: "When surgery is not an option – Advances in trans-catheter aortic valve implantation."

Morley Pitcher, a long-time POHA member, shared his experience, having had the procedure. Dr. Mike Martin presented Sandra Lauck with a gift of appreciation from POHA. A hospital visitor appreciation tea followed.

What To Do With Your "soon-to-be-obsolete" Canadian Pennies

Everyone seems to have a glass jar or a bucket of pennies collecting dust in their house. With their end fast approaching, and while time is still available, perhaps you'd consider donating them to the POHA where their accumulated value can be put to good use helping Hospitals, Heart Patients, and their families. Individually, yes, they are just pennies, however, collectively they can sure add up. Phone our Secretary, Patricia, at 604-

465-6231 and she will arrange for a pick up, roll them, bank them, and provide you with a Tax Donation Receipt.

Volunteer Visitors

We want to recognize the following Volunteer Visitors who provide valuable support to patients in hospitals throughout B.C.

This list includes members of affiliate organizations, including:

- Kelowna Coronary Exercise Society
- Kamloops Mending Hearts
- Chilliwack Heart Support Group
- Burnaby General Hospital – Hearts on the Mend

Charlie Adams	Bill Anderson	Brian Anderson
Eric Anderson	Paul Atilia	Robert Axford
Maureen Baker	Kenneth Beesley	Harvey Bentley
John Berard	Ken Bernath	Craig Bidnell
Marjorie Blair	Doug Black	Bob Blasina
Tom Bleakley	Barry Botsford	Ed Bradbeer
Alfred Buchi	Gene C. Chiang	Len Chahley
Mike Chisholm	Brian Cooke	Dave Crealock
Rick Cozzuol	Dave Darling	Robert Davies
Ed Dezura	Clar Dickson	Dave Darling
Roy Edwards	George Filteau	Gerald Green
Patrick Hagan	Vern Halverson	Mark Haslem
Don Hayes	Jean Highlands	Nils Hognestad
Morris Hudniuk	Andrew Law	Cayton Lehman
Roger Kocheff	Jane Luke	Thomas Lundgren
Gwen Lowe	Mike Martin	Peter Miller
Sadru Mitha	Jerry Moloci	Fred Morley
John Moxness	Len Muller	Toufic Naman
Charles Nixon	Fiona Odam	Mac Parlee
Vickie Pedlar	Art Perry	Roger Phillips
Vaughn Raeside	Art Ratnarajah	John Rose
Jennifer Rule	Peter Sebastian	Art Simmons
Barbara Smith	Chantal Smyth	William Speer
Alan Sturgess	Brian Symonds	Chester Szarko
Tom Taylor	John Titos	Larry Tuan
Terry Vickers	Al Vogt	Dick Weller
Catherine Williams	Frank Winters	Hans Wong
Bruce Wood	Bill Wostradowski	Harry Yee
George Zukerman		

Newsletter by E-Mail

With this edition of the Newsletter we are going to try a little experiment.

For those of you who have provided us with your e-mail address, we will be sending you an electronic version of the Newsletter.

Why are we doing this? There are a couple of reasons:

1. The costs for printing, inserting the Newsletter into envelopes and postage, are increasing every year.
2. The electronic version gets to you faster; has the photos in colour; and reduces the amount of paper waste.

Here are some points to be aware of:

1. If you are using any form of e-mail blocking technology, please add **pacificopenheart.org** to your "friends" list.

- The Newsletter will be sent as a "blind carbon copy – bcc". This will ensure that nobody will see the e-mail addresses of everybody else that will be receiving it.
- It will be sent in "portable data format - .pdf", so you will need Adobe Acrobat to open the file. If you don't have it, it is free on the Internet.

If you prefer to receive the printed Newsletter and NOT the electronic version, just send us an e-mail at:

newsletter@pacificopenheart.org

Put "CANCEL" in the Subject or in the body of the message.

POHA Donation to Ridge Meadows Hospital



Ed Dezura of the POHA and Karen Horton Director of Development, Eagle Ridge Hospital Foundation are shown with the cheque for \$2,800 donated by POHA. The funds were used

to purchase teaching videos and a sleeper chair in the Monitored Care Unit. The nurses in this Unit had the following to say about the chair: "This chair is in demand on our unit - being the only one in six rooms. The families just love having a place to stay beside their family. Many thanks!"

2012 Golf Tournament Report

By Roger Kocheff – Tournament Director

This year's tournament (the 28th) was held June 22 at Poppy Estate in Aldergrove. There were 52 golfers slogging around in the rain. What a day!!!! In spite of the weather everyone enjoyed the opportunity to renew old friendships and share stories about the worst weather they ever played golf in. June 22, 2012 may have been that day. Thanks to all for coming and playing.

I want to especially thank our sponsors (listed below) and all those who donated prizes and their time to help. These contributions make it possible for us to donate excess funds to local hospitals for the benefit of heart patients. This year we will be able to contribute about \$3000.



John Marcanato receiving prize of weekend in Whistler, with the use of a luxury vehicle, presented by John Chesman of MCL Motorcars

We had two great door prize draws donated by John Chesman. John Marconato won a night in Whistler

and the use of an MCL Range Rover for the weekend and Kevin Staples won 2 club house passes to the Canadian Ladies Open at Vancouver Golf Club. Keith Wiebe won a free entry to next year's tournament in the early bird entry draw. Closest to the pin prizes were won by Billy Drummond, Stan Lim, Elaine Belliveau, and Janice Groff. This year's tournament winners were Kandi Kozler, Steve Lebedovich, Wilf Jacobson and Roger Kocheff. If you are interested in adding your name to our golfer list please contact Roger Kocheff at rkocheff@telus.net or 604-467-2904.

It is the sponsors listed below that make our golf tournament a success. We thank them and ask each of you to think of them when making purchasing decisions.

See you at next year's tournament, **June 21, 2013.**

Golf Sponsors

Directors Guild of Canada BC District Council; DMCL Chartered Accountants; London Drugs; Hub International Insurance Brokers; Heart & Stroke Foundation BC & Yukon; Unipharm Wholesale Drugs; Maple Ridge Veterinary Hospital; Pharmasave 158 Ocean Park; G&F Financial Group; Home Restaurants; National Bank; VGH Cardiac Services; Austin Metal Fabricators; Royal Columbian Hospital Foundation; Scotia Bank Langley City



Winning Foursome - (L to R) - Roger Kocheff, Steve Lebedovich, Kandi Kozler, Wilf Jacobson

2012 Don Topp Trophy

By Dr. Michael Martin – Past President

I first met Marie Donatiello on October 17, 1998, at the South Burnaby Lawn Bowling Clubhouse. We were attending a celebration of the tenth anniversary of Pacific Open Heart Association's incorporation as a non-profit society. Her husband Fred, and her mother Lily McCormack accompanied Marie. This was my first POHA event and my wife and I had the good fortune to end up sitting at a table with Marie, Fred and Lily.

Since that time, I have been on the POHA Board of Directors with Marie who has been a director for nearly 20 years. During my time on the Board, I have seen Marie step forward to volunteer for almost any job that needs to be done. Her long-term responsibility has been the distribution of pillows and liaison with Telus volunteers. When the Telus representative moved, in typical style, Marie offered to also coordinate the

production of the pillows including purchase of materials, silk-screening, sewing, and shipping between Vancouver and various sewing depots. Other duties Marie has accepted include arranging our AGM venue, purchase of chocolates for hospital staffs at Valentines, working the Telus Lottery booth on a regular basis in order to earn a free telephone line for POHA and talking various merchants into donating prizes for the golf tournament. Marie has also provided us with another unofficial supporter, being her husband Fred. He is a regular at all POHA functions and, for years, announced the commencement of golf tournament banquets on his trumpet.



President Alfred Buchi Presenting Don Topp Trophy to Marie Donatiello

The Don Topp Memorial Trophy is awarded each year to a person who has contributed in a meaningful way to the well being of the POHA and therefore to the members and to

the open-heart surgery patients whom we support. Alfred Buchi announced, at the Annual General Meeting, that the 2012 recipient of the trophy was Marie Donatiello. She is the first recipient who has not had open-heart surgery. The fact that she works so hard in memory of her mother, who benefited from surgery, makes Marie a fitting recipient of this year's trophy.

VOLUNTEER FOR THE HEALTH OF IT

We always need more members to join the ranks of the volunteer visitors.

If you are can spend 1 to 2 hours every couple of weeks to give support to open heart surgery patients, one of the following team leaders would be very happy to tell you more about the opportunities available:

Vancouver General	Alfred Buchi	604-581-5508
Royal Columbian	Mike Martin	604-535-3195
St. Paul's	Vern Halverson	604-261-2153

Have You Moved?

We like to keep our Membership list current. So if you have moved, or are planning to move, please complete the form below.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE	
Name: _____	
Address: _____	
City: _____	
Postal Code: _____	
Phone: _____	
E-Mail: _____	
Send to: Pacific Open Heart Association PO Box 3979 MPO Vancouver, BC, V6B 3Z4	

Membership Reminder

If you're an existing member and haven't yet renewed, please send us your cheque today. If you're not a member, please give serious consideration to joining the POHA. Membership is still **only \$10.00**, unchanged in over 20 years!! Funds from memberships are used to cover operating costs of the Association such as: the production of our brochures (in several languages); postage; Annual General Meeting expenses; the purchase of poinsettias for patients who are recovering from open surgery during the Christmas holiday. None of our volunteers or directors receives any form of compensation and never has. Any surplus funds from membership renewals are donated to hospitals for sundry equipment in the cardiac wards. So please renew and help support the good work that POHA has been doing for over 25 years. Thank you.

MEMBERSHIP REQUEST	
Name: _____	
Address: _____	
City: _____	
Postal Code: _____	
Phone: _____	
E-Mail: _____	
I am interested in: being a visitor: <input type="checkbox"/>	
being a volunteer: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Golf: <input type="checkbox"/>	

PACIFIC HEARTBEAT NEWSLETTER

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