



HEALTH AWARENESS

Test Measures New Heart Disease And Stroke Risk Factor

(NAPSA)—Doctors have an important new test in the battle against heart attack and stroke. The PLAC test is a simple blood test that measures Lp-PLA₂, a marker of inflammation in blood vessels that can lead to these cardiovascular diseases. The clinically proven test helps doctors identify high-risk patients and prescribe preventive therapies that include diet, exercise and medication.

America's Top Killers

Heart disease and stroke are two of the leading killers in America. Heart disease is the single-leading cause of death in the United States, killing almost 500,000 Americans each year. Stroke is the third-leading cause of death. About 700,000 Americans have a stroke each year.

Identifying at-risk patients earlier is the best way to prevent a cardiovascular event. Unfortunately for many patients, however, their first indication of heart disease or stroke also may be their last. An estimated 50 percent of men and 64 percent of women who die suddenly of heart disease have no previous warning signs, such as elevated cholesterol. Furthermore, there previously was no simple blood test for stroke risk. As a result, researchers have looked for other factors that might reveal the risk for future heart attack or stroke.

Aid in Predicting Risk

This research has included Lp-PLA₂ (lipoprotein-associated phospholipase A₂), an enzyme associated with the formation of plaque,



A NEW AND IMPORTANT TEST has been developed in the fight against heart disease and stroke—two of the leading causes of death in the United States.

or fatty deposits in the artery wall. Lp-PLA₂ is carried to artery walls by low-density lipoprotein, where the enzyme can activate an inflammatory response, making the plaque prone to rupture. Scientists now understand that clot formation caused by plaque rupture is the leading cause of heart attack and stroke. Elevated Lp-PLA₂ doubles a person's risk of heart attack or stroke, independent of other risk factors.

The good news for doctors and patients is that an inexpensive blood test now is available to measure Lp-PLA₂. The PLAC test from diaDexus has been cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as an aid in predicting risk for heart disease, and is the first test approved by the FDA to identify stroke risk. Once a person is identified as being at high risk, there are a number of lifestyle and therapeutic interventions a doctor can prescribe to reduce that risk. To learn more, visit www.plactest.com.