

WOMEN'S HEALTH TRENDS

Most Women Would Not Seek Emergency Care For Common Signs Of Heart Disease, Survey Finds

(NAPSA)—When women experience head, neck, back and jaw pain, a common symptom of a heart attack, only 47 percent of women would call their doctor and just 35 percent would call 911 or visit an emergency department, a national survey conducted by the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) reported.

The survey of more than 1,000 women over 35 years old was conducted by ACEP as part of their “Take it to Heart” campaign, which is devoted to empowering women and those who love them with information about the signs and symptoms of heart disease and how it may be diagnosed in the emergency department.

“Waiting to seek medical attention can mean the difference between life and death,” said Dr. Linda Lawrence, MD, ACEP board member. “This information is particularly important as the holidays approach, because it is a stressful time and we are more likely to neglect our health due to the many distractions and obligations over the next several weeks.”

Of the women who were surveyed on what action they would take if they were experiencing unexplained pain in their jaw, arm, neck or back:

- 66 percent would take a pain reliever such as aspirin or ibuprofen;
- 59 percent would lay down and rest;
- 46 percent would wait 24 hours to see if the symptoms would go away.

Atypical Symptoms Ignored Even More

Women are even less likely to seek medical attention when they



experience flu-like symptoms such as nausea, clamminess or cold sweats, which are considered atypical symptoms of a heart attack. In fact, only 37 percent of women would call their doctor and only 10 percent would visit an emergency room or call 911 if they were experiencing flu-like symptoms, the survey found.

Varying Awareness of Diagnostic Testing

The survey reported that women had varying knowledge of tests used to diagnose heart disease. More than 83 percent say they are very knowledgeable about blood tests and X-rays, and nearly 70 percent felt knowledgeable about electrocardiograph or EKGs. However, less than half of the women say they are very knowledgeable about angiographs, nuclear imaging and electron beam computed tomography.

“Take it to Heart” resources are available at www.acep.org/takeittoheart. ACEP’s “Take it to Heart” campaign will continue to educate women about when to go to the emergency room and how to effectively communicate their symptoms to emergency physicians through publicity outreach.