

World's Leading Cardiologists in Brazil to Prevent Heart Disease

Contributed by Newsroom
Saturday, 21 May 2005

Heart disease and stroke cause four times more deaths in mothers in most developing countries than childbirth and HIV/AIDS combined. Yet, dangerously insufficient attention is being given to the prevention and control of heart disease and stroke by governments, business, labour unions, health authorities and international aid agencies.

In response to this rapidly increasing health burden, the world's leading cardiologists are gathering today at the World Heart Federation's Sixth International Conference on Preventive Cardiology in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil. The meeting will happen from May 21 to May 25 and its goal will be to drive policy change and stimulate action.

"Heart disease and stroke is a largely preventable disease," said Stephen Leeder, Professor of Public Health, former dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Sydney and keynote speaker at the conference.

"A three-pronged approach to the prevention and control of heart disease and stroke is essential. Governments and industry must invest in better healthcare systems and heart-healthy city environments, population wide health promotion needs to be put into place and our focus on primary care as the place to treat heart risk must be increased.

"To wait until heart disease and stroke decimate workforces before we take the global epidemic of heart disease and stroke seriously, would be both a health and an economic tragedy," said Stephen Leeder.

Heart disease and stroke cut into productive workforces in developing countries, manifesting the same pattern of mortality as in the West in the 1960's before prevention and treating began.

"80 per cent of all deaths due to heart disease and stroke occur in low and middle income countries, increasingly affecting victims in their productive years. In Brazil, for example, 28 per cent of heart attack and stroke victims are in their productive years," said Professor Leeder.

"Unless intervention programs are put into effect now we will witness a global health crisis in developing countries as skilled workers die or become disabled, women are widowed and older people require expensive medical support for disabilities related to heart disease and stroke."

"The worldwide shift from rural to city living brings the opportunity to consume more food, typically food heavy in fats, salt and sugars, and the car supplants the bicycle and the foot.

"A worldwide epidemic of overweight and obesity, a decrease in physical activity and an increase in tobacco consumption, are a forewarning of a rapidly growing epidemic of heart disease and stroke ahead," said Valentin Fuster, President, World Heart Federation.

Journal of Prevention

The World Heart Federation will launch its new quarterly journal, Prevention and Control, at the Sixth International Conference on Preventive Cardiology.

The journal is targeted at cardiologists, primary care professionals (general practitioners, nurses) and patients, public health community and policy makers.

The Journal of Prevention and Control seeks to provide a forum for dialogue and education on matters that relate foremost to the prevention and control of cardiovascular disease worldwide, with a special focus on low and middle

income countries.

Articles will address topics ranging from the extent and epidemiology of the problem, to interventions that effectively control and prevent cardiovascular diseases, economic evaluations of successful interventions, cardiovascular surveillance and health policies, professional education, ethical issues and technological innovations particularly related to prevention.

The emphasis will be on approaches that can be applied in settings with limited resources. The Journal will also publish supplements and news of events and meetings of global interest.

World Heart Federation

The World Heart Federation, a non governmental organization based in Geneva, Switzerland, is committed to helping the global population achieve a longer and better life through prevention and control of heart disease and stroke, with a particular focus on low and middle-income countries.

It is comprised of 186 member societies of cardiology and heart foundations from 100 countries covering the regions of Asia-Pacific, Europe, the Americas and Africa.

The annual conference, focusing on the primary and secondary prevention of heart disease and stroke, is organized by the World Heart Federation with its Council on Epidemiology and Prevention, and supported by the American Center for Disease Control (CDC), the United States's National Heart and Lung and Blood Institute and the World Health Organization (WHO), among others.

This year's theme is "Protecting the Heart of Global Development." The conference is being held for the first time in Latin America to focus on the significant impact heart disease and stroke is having on developing economies.

World Heart Federation - www.worldheart.org

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