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SCAD Alliance

Post Office Box 4300
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To empower Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection (SCAD) survivors with an accurate diagnosis, superior outcome and answers.

SCAD Alliance applauds “significant step” in recognizing and treating dangerous underdiagnosed heart disorder

ALEXANDRIA, VA (February 26, 2018) – Leaders of SCAD Alliance are hailing the scientific statement from the American Heart Association (AHA), “Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection: Current State of the Science” as a landmark clinical document on the care of patients with spontaneous coronary artery dissection. SCAD is a rare, dangerous heart disorder, and a cause of heart attack.

“The AHA Scientific Statement on SCAD is the first published multidisciplinary, comprehensive, state-of-the-art literature review and expert consensus of SCAD,” says Esther Kim, MD, MPH, chairperson of the SCAD Alliance Scientific Advisory Board, and co-chair of the document. “The AHA SCAD statement will greatly aid healthcare professionals caring for SCAD heart attack patients in the acute clinical setting as well as the outpatient clinics. Our hope is that providers in many different areas of medicine--including emergency department personnel, general and interventional cardiologists, vascular medicine practitioners, radiologists, general practitioners, and nursing professionals--will find this statement helpful in the care of patients who have suffered a heart attack from SCAD.”

According to the AHA document, SCAD “has emerged as an important cause of acute coronary syndrome, myocardial infarction, and sudden death, particularly among young women and individuals with few conventional atherosclerotic risk factors.” While SCAD can affect men and women of various ages, it primarily affects women in their 40s and 50s.

“With this document now widely available to the medical community, patients finally have hope that our own doctor may have heard of SCAD by the time we show up in-hospital, shell-shocked, and eager for answers,” said Katherine Leon, survivor of a SCAD heart attack and co-founder of SCAD Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to researching SCAD and supporting people affected by the disorder. Added Kim, “This is the type of national exposure an uncommon disease such as SCAD requires so that patients receive proper diagnoses and appropriate care, including tailored cardiac rehabilitation, support for anxiety and depression, and appropriate counseling regarding activity and life after SCAD.”

The aim of the Scientific Statement on SCAD is to “spur a change in the paradigm of care for women and men with SCAD,” according to Kim. It reviews the current evidence and provides



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consensus recommendations of experts from around the world to improve the understanding, diagnosis, and management of SCAD. It also set forth a call to action in the medical community to embark on collaborative research to further understand what causes SCAD and how best to prevent it.

Kim, Associate Professor of Medicine and Director of the Arteriopathy Clinic at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, initiated the project through her role on the SCAD Alliance scientific advisory board (SAB), with the help of fellow SAB member Malissa Wood, MD, Co-Director, Massachusetts General Hospital Heart Center. The Scientific Statement was chaired by Sharonne Hayes, MD, of Mayo Clinic, and co-chaired by Dr. Kim and SCAD Alliance SAB member, Jacqueline Saw, MD, FRCPC, FACC, Interventional Cardiologist and Clinical Professor, University of British Columbia. Other authors on the statement who are also SAB members include David Adlam, MD, Senior Lecturer, Cardiovascular Sciences, University of Leicester; Mark Lindsay, MD, PhD, Cardiologist and Assistant Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School; Sahar Naderi, Cardiologist, Kaiser Permanente, San Francisco, and Santhi Ganesh, Assistant Professor, Cardiovascular Medicine, University of Michigan.

The cause of SCAD is unknown, according to the Scientific Statement, but recent research has shown it may be associated with other arterial diseases that can predispose the heart arteries to tear, and patients who have suffered SCAD may require further testing of their other arteries. The Scientific Statement notes that there are several unanswered questions about SCAD, including why it occurs, why it primarily affects younger women, if there is a genetic component, how frequently it recurs, and what can be done to prevent recurrence. The Statement calls for increased awareness and further research.

ABOUT SCAD ALLIANCE

SCAD Alliance (www.scadalliance.org) is a Virginia-based nonprofit patient advocacy organization whose mission is to be the leader in advancing the science of Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection (SCAD) through improved knowledge and cooperation among health care professionals, patients and their families. A key program of SCAD Alliance is the iSCAD Registry, an independent multi-center registry coordinated by Boston-based PERFUSE Study Group.