

[General News Article]

Landmark Study Examines Investigational Treatment for Heart Disease *Volunteers Needed for Largest Ever Chelation Study*

Because of medical research and resulting improvements in treatment and prevention options, more people are living longer with heart disease. However, heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the U.S., with 13 million Americans living with the disease. Recognizing the urgency for new treatments, a growing number of patients are looking for ways to prevent heart attacks.

The National Institutes of Health is conducting a nationwide study on the safety and effectiveness of chelation therapy, an investigational treatment for people with heart disease. Ultimately almost 2,000 people with heart disease will participate in this important research study, making this the largest study of its kind. More than 100 medical institutions across the country are taking part in this study.

“It is important for people with heart disease to know whether chelation therapy should be added to the list of proven treatments,” said Gervasio A. Lamas, M.D., principal investigator of the study and director of cardiovascular research and academic affairs at Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, Florida. “This study will help us definitively answer that critical question.”

Many people with heart disease are already considering chelation therapy despite a lack of clear evidence that it works. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 60,000 people per year use chelation therapy as an alternative treatment.

The goal of the study is to test whether chelation therapy and/or high-dose vitamin therapy is effective for the treatment of heart disease. Chelation therapy is a process in which a synthetic or man-made amino acid called EDTA is delivered intravenously.

Study researchers are now recruiting patients. They are looking for men and women age 50 and older who have had a heart attack. Those who participate will join a nationwide effort to learn whether chelation therapy works, helping the medical community find new and effective treatments for heart disease.

There is no cost to participate in the study and participants will be closely monitored to ensure they receive the optimal standard of care for their heart disease, such as vitamin supplements and advice on lifestyle and diet. Participants will be randomly assigned to receive: either chelation therapy or placebo (saline) solution and either high-dose vitamin therapy or placebo pills. All participants will also receive low-dose vitamins.

More information about the study is available at the NIH National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine’s Web site at www.nccam.nih.gov/chelation or by calling 1-888-644-6226.

“I don’t want to leave any stone unturned as we look for ways to address heart disease,” said Dr. Lamas. “And I don’t think patients living with heart disease want us to either.”

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This article is provided by the Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, Florida. As Florida’s largest private not-for-profit teaching hospital, Mount Sinai Medical Center is a distinguished leader in education and research. For more information, please contact 305-674-2162.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Photos of Dr. Gervasio Lamas and study participants are available upon request. Please contact Rebecca Leaf at 202-745-5100.