



APS Foundation of America, Inc.

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APS Often the Culprit Behind Heart Attack and Stroke in Younger Adults

The Antiphospholipid Antibody Syndrome Foundation of America, Inc. (APSFA) urges the public, as well as the medical community, to learn more about this rare disease. APS Awareness Month runs throughout June.

APS is an autoimmune disorder. Such illnesses occur when the body's tissues are attacked by its own substances. In APS, the body recognizes certain components of blood or cell membranes as foreign substances and produces antibodies--a specialized protein the body uses to prevent infection--against them. It is the major cause of strokes in persons under 40 years old, blood clots (thrombosis) – which can lead to heart attack or stroke – vision disturbances and repeated, otherwise unexplainable miscarriages.

A heart attack generally occurs when a coronary artery clot blocks the supply of blood and oxygen to heart muscle. There are more than one million heart attack sufferers annually in the U.S.; about half of those stricken die. Unfortunately, many heart attack victims wait two hours or more after symptoms begin before they seek medical help. This delay can result in death or lasting heart damage.

A stroke, or "brain attack," occurs when blood circulation to the brain fails. Brain cells can die from decreased blood flow and the resulting lack of oxygen. There are two broad categories of stroke: those caused by a blockage of blood flow (called "ischemic" strokes) and those caused by bleeding. Ischemic strokes account for about 80 percent of all strokes. They usually are not fatal.

A transient ischemic attack, or TIA, is an ischemic stroke that occurs when the brain's blood supply is interrupted briefly (10 minutes or less). There generally is no lasting damage, but recent research shows that about half of people who experience a TIA have a full-blown stroke within 24 hours.

APS is the leading cause of heart and brain attacks in people under 50. If you have a personal or family history of heart attack or stroke before age 50, ask your primary care physician to test you for APS. It requires only a simple blood test.

Founded in 2005, the APS Foundation of America is the leading United States health agency dedicated specifically to bringing national awareness to APS. We are a volunteer-run, community-based, non-profit organization dedicated to spreading awareness and support to those with the disease.

Knowing more about APS can make all the difference. APS: Know the Symptoms of the Syndrome!

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NOTES TO EDITORS

* The key blood tests are Anticardiolipin (aCL) antibodies (IgG, IgM, and IgA), Lupus anticoagulant (LAC) – a panel of blood clotting tests that may include the dilute Russel Viper venom time (dRVVT), lupus aPTT, mixing studies, and hex phase phospholipid test, platelet neutralization procedure and Antibodies to b2-glycoprotein I (IgG, IgM, IgA).

* The conservative estimate of people at risk from Antiphospholipid Antibody Syndrome (APS) is 1% - 5% of the population.

* In pregnancy clotting of the placenta can cause miscarriage or stillbirth. Typically, women are not tested for APS until after three consecutive miscarriages.

* The recognition and treatment of APS improves the chances of preventing miscarriage from below 20% to above 80%.

* One third of strokes occurring in younger people (under the age of 50) are due to APS.

* Some cases are misdiagnosed as multiple sclerosis. Some APS patients also have Lupus.

* Founded in 2005, the APS Foundation of America, Inc. is the leading United States nonprofit health agency dedicated to bringing national awareness to Antiphospholipid Antibody Syndrome (APS), the major cause of multiple miscarriages, thrombosis, young strokes and heart attacks. We are a volunteer run, community based 501(c)3 non-profit Public Charity organization and is dedicated to fostering and facilitating joint efforts in the areas of education, support, public awareness, research and patient services. Our URL is <http://www.apsfa.org>

* All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from <http://www.apsfa.org>.