

Heart Disease Among Males with Hemophilia

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Among those living with hemophilia, the topic of heart disease in the past has had several conflicting reports. Some studies have suggested that there is a protective factor associated with hemophilia regarding heart disease. Other studies, however, have shown just the opposite. One of the more recent studies (Kulkarni, R., Soucie, M.J., Evatt, B.L. (2005) "Prevalence and Risk Factors for Heart Disease Among Males With Hemophilia." *American Journal of Hematology*, 79, 36-42) suggests that males with hemophilia have unique risk factors such as infusion of factor concentrate and infection with HIV that may predispose them to heart disease as life expectancy increases.

The study also suggests that heart disease may be just as common among persons with hemophilia as in the general population, but with fewer complications. We should really start with what we do know. Heart and blood vessel disease has no geographic, gender or socioeconomic boundaries. In the United States, heart disease is the leading cause of death among men and women. The American Heart Association has identified several risk factors associated with heart disease. Some of them can be modified, treated or controlled, and some cannot.

The more risk factors you have, the greater your chance of developing heart disease. These risk factors include:

- Age
- Family history
- Race
- Gender (especially males)
- Tobacco smoke
- High blood pressure and high cholesterol
- Lack of physical activity
- Obesity/overweight
- Diabetes diagnosis

Prevention is key when it comes to heart disease! Just knowing that we can all be at risk for heart disease, it is important to incorporate healthy habits into our lifestyle. Some simple ways to decrease your risk of heart disease include adding 30 minutes of physical activity into your day, incorporating healthy eating habits, and avoiding alcohol and tobacco. For more information, please visit the American Heart Association website (www.americanheart.org), or call Shannon at the HoG office.