B2.2: Women with Lupus are Unaware of their Cardiovascular Risk Factors and Increased Risk for heart Disease

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Abstract:
Introduction: Women with systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) display a 7- to 10-fold increased risk for cardiovascular disease (CVD) compared to non-SLE controls, yet many are unaware of this risk despite years spent in the healthcare system. It is not clear why they lack awareness of increased CVD risk or which factors influence awareness. The purpose of this study was to assess in women with SLE: general CVD knowledge compared to women without SLE; perceived CVD risk; association between clinically identified and perceived CVD risk factors; and factors that influenced CVD risk awareness and adoption of risk reducing behaviors.

Method(s): Questionnaires, interviews and clinical assessments, including fasting blood specimens, were used to collect data from 60 women with SLE (45±15 years old, 12% African-American, 14% Hispanic) on: demographics; general CVD knowledge (American Heart Association [AHA] National Survey of women’s awareness of heart disease); perceived CVD
risk; perceived CVD risk factors; actual CVD risk factors; risk reducing behaviors; and healthcare provider counseling. Logistic regression identified factors that influenced risk awareness and adoption of risk reducing behaviors.

**Results:** Women with SLE in this study were more aware of women’s leading cause of death than US women who responded to the 2006 AHA survey (73% v 57%), but fewer than 25% perceived themselves at increased CVD risk. Age was a significant predictor (p=0.05) for awareness of increased risk; younger age correlated with increased awareness. Most women received information about heart disease from public media. On average, women had 4 CVD risk factors, but they perceived they had only 2. The number of perceived risk factors predicted adoption of risk reducing behaviors (p=0.03).

**Discussion & Conclusions:** Women in this study with SLE underestimated their CVD risk factors and did not personalize their increased CVD risk. Healthcare providers’ identification and discussion of CVD risk factors in women with SLE may enhance their risk awareness and the adoption of risk reducing behaviors.

**Abstract History:**
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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No, I (or a member of my immediate family) have not received something of value* from or own stock (or stock options) in a commercial company or institution related directly or indirectly to the subject of my presentation.

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