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### Cardiovascular disease, race and ethnicity: An Asian perspective

Recent studies have shown that the prevalence and incidence of atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease are increasing around the world. It has also become apparent that cardiovascular disease is closely connected to social status, economic development, race and ethnicity. Cardiovascular disease, traditionally thought to be less common in Asians, is becoming major public health and economic burdens in some Asian countries. Social and economic factors are significantly connected to the disease through risk factors like smoking, obesity, diet, cholesterol levels and life style. Combating these require changes in education and legislative policies at both national and international levels. However, the relationship of race and ethnicity to cardiovascular disease is less clear. The prevalence of heart disease and strokes is different between different racial and ethnic groups, both within the same country and between different countries. Racial and ethnic differences in responses to anticoagulation, hypertension, hyperlipidemia and heart failure therapy have been documented. Among Asians, coronary artery disease is more prevalent in Asian Indians, while there is higher incidence of hemorrhagic strokes in East Asians. Whether these are due to social and economic differences, or to genetic variations secondary to race and ethnicity, are subjects of great interest and debate. Genetic factors, if found to be a significant cause of cardiovascular disease, will require a very different approach to management based on pharmacogenetics. Therapy of hyperlipidemia and anticoagulation tailored to Asians is already recognized, but more studies are needed to determine whether treatment of other cardiovascular disease also require pharmacogenetic consideration.

#### Biography

Heng graduated from the University of Singapore and had specialty and subspecialty clinical training in New Zealand. His research training was done in New Zealand and Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles (affiliated with UCLA). Heng is Clinical Professor of Medicine in UCLA, and has authored or coauthored over 150 original publications, abstracts and book chapters. Heng was Chief of Cardiology of the UCLA San Fernando Medicine Program for over 10 years, and is currently in private cardiology consultation practice.

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