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ISET NEWS BRIEFS

Scientific Sessions, Clinical Reviews and Trial Updates

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Family Practice Physicians Relatively Uninformed About Uterine Fibroid Embolization

Many family practice physicians treat women who have uterine fibroids, but 90 percent state that they are relatively uninformed or only somewhat informed of the uterine-sparing procedure called uterine fibroid embolization (UFE), according to a national survey. Of those who had heard of UFE, 42 percent didn't know that the procedure is performed by interventional radiologists. The survey of 108 family physicians performed by HRA Research revealed each doctor saw an average of 19 fibroid patients a month. Eighty percent of family practice physicians said they would be likely to refer women who have fibroids to an interventional radiologists for treatment, according to the survey.

“Many family practice physicians attempt to avoid sending their patients to a gynecologist, because they know they might lose the patient, which in fact does happen,” said John H. Fischer II, M.D., an assistant professor of radiology at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital and Baylor College of Medicine, Houston. “It is more palatable to refer to a radiologist, knowing that they will be more likely to get the patient back after treatment. This is a real opportunity for

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interventional radiologists to educate family practice physicians about the benefits of UFE as a fibroid treatment option and interventional radiology as a clinical service.”As many as 40 percent of women over 35 have fibroids, which can cause excess bleeding and pain. Treatment ranges from hormone therapy, such as birth control pills to surgery to remove the fibroids (myomectomy) or the uterus (hysterectomy) to minimally invasive procedures such as UFE. In UFE, an interventional radiologist makes a tiny incision in the woman’s groin and advances a thin tube (catheter) to the fibroid. Tiny particles are sent through the catheter to the artery that feeds the fibroid, plugging it up and causing the fibroid to shrink and die due to lack of blood supply. Studies show 85 percent of women who undergo UFE experience significant relief from their fibroid symptoms.

The International Symposium on Endovascular Therapy (ISET) is attended by more than 1,200 physicians, scientists, allied professionals and industry professionals from around the world. The meeting pioneered the use of live cases to promote the multidisciplinary treatment of cardiac and vascular disease by endovascular means. ISET is presented by the Baptist Cardiac & Vascular Institute, Miami. ISET 2010 is taking place Jan. 17-21 near Miami Beach, Fla. For more information, visit www.ISET.org.

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Editor’s note: Study numbers are current as of January 12, 2010 and may change upon presentation at the ISET meeting.

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