

Cardiovascular Disease and Aging: The Collaborative Health Studies Coordinating Center and the Cardiovascular Health Research Unit

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Two Centers dedicated to the study of cardiovascular disease as well as other conditions of aging are the Collaborative Health Studies Coordinating Center (CHS) and the Cardiovascular Health Research Unit (CHRU). Investigators from both sites collaborate on a large number of studies related to CVD. While the Centers reside in two separate schools, the CHS-CC in the Biostatistics Department, School of Public Health, and the CHRU in the Division of General Internal Medicine, School of Medicine, investigators from each have been collaborating in multiple studies since 1988. The CHS-CC began after Richard Kronmal, PhD, Biostatistics, received a large contract to coordinate the operations and data management of the Cardiovascular Health Study (CHS), a multi-site epidemiologic study designed to investigate risk factors for heart disease and stroke in 5,888 older adults. Over 400 articles have been published using data from this cohort and data collection continues today. The CHS-CC is also the Coordinating Center for the Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis (MESA) which is investigating subclinical cardiovascular disease in 6814 white, black, Hispanic and Chinese men and women 45 to 84 years of age. A primary goal of this study is to assess coronary calcification as a risk factor for CVD. A large clinical trial, the Ginkgo Evaluation of Memory (GEM) Study is also coordinated at the CHS-CC. This double-blind placebo controlled study to evaluate *Ginkgo biloba* for the prevention of dementia successfully enrolled over 3,000 adults 75 years of age or older in 2000. Answers to the primary questions are expected by 2009. More than 150 other studies, including many small studies ancillary to the three mentioned above, have been conducted or managed over the years. The Center, directed by Dr. Kronmal and Associate Director Alice Arnold, PhD, is located at the UW's Sand Point facility near Magnuson Park. The CHS-CC welcomes new investigators to collaborate in the parent studies by either writing manuscripts or developing new ancillary studies to maximize use of the data collected over the years. The CHRU is a joint program of the University of Washington and Group Health Cooperative (GHC) which develops projects to enhance bridges between medicine and public health that foster research on the epidemiology and prevention of cardiovascular diseases. Co-Directors of the Center are Bruce M. Psaty, MD, PhD, and David S. Siscovick, MD, MPH, professors of Medicine and Epidemiology. CHRU investigators are actively involved in the CHS CC projects. A number of studies involving collaborations with Group Health's Center for Health Studies, Seattle King County Health Department's Emergency Medical Services, and the UW Clinical Nutrition Research Unit, are or have been conducted at the CHRU. A series of CHRU case-control studies have focused on the outcomes of myocardial infarction, primary cardiac arrest, stroke, atrial fibrillation, and venous thrombosis. Investigators of this Center have also been involved in major cohort studies including the Coronary Artery Risk Development in (Young) Adults (CARDIA) and the Women's Health Initiative (WHI). A training grant designed to provide epidemiological training in cardiovascular disease prevention to Master's and PhD students is also administered through the CHRU.