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Heartfelt Moments Obesity Education Campaign Survey Fact Sheet

Survey Overview

After years of public education regarding risk factors for and consequences of heart disease, particularly among women, a recent survey of 1,001 women revealed nearly all women understand being overweight is a significant risk factor for heart disease and losing weight can significantly reduce that risk. Yet, a majority reported they are overweight, and as such are at risk for heart disease. So, while women understand their risk of heart disease, many are not taking action to live heart healthy and reduce their risk via weight loss. This may be in part because women do not adequately fear heart disease, which every year kills more women in the United States than any other disease.¹

Key Survey Findings

- Women are more afraid of getting cancer than developing heart disease by a wide margin – 61 percent versus 21 percent, despite the fact that the true leading killer of women is heart disease.¹
- Ninety-seven percent of women surveyed link being overweight to an increased risk of heart disease and the same percentage understand that losing weight can significantly reduce their risk of heart disease. Yet sadly, nearly 35 million women in the U.S. are overweight or obese and national obesity rates continue to grow.²
 - 55 percent of survey respondents reported they are overweight.
- A majority of women (57 percent) understand that obesity increases their risk of heart disease more than smoking.³
 - Younger women understand that obesity increases their risk of heart disease more often than smoking more than older women, with 77 percent of women age 18-34 vs. 33 percent of women age 65+ reporting obesity increases their risk of heart disease more than smoking.
- A majority of women (56 percent) believe people who are 100 pounds or more overweight can lose weight and keep it off through diet and exercise alone. However, studies have found that diet, exercise and behavior modification alone failed 95 percent of the time after five years, and that people regain as much as two-thirds of the weight they lost within one year and almost all of it within five years.^{4,5}
- Forty percent of obese women report they seldom or never discuss heart disease with other women in their family.
- Significantly overweight women are receptive to a close friend or relative expressing concern about their health due to their being overweight. Three in four (79 percent) would thank them for caring; only 9 percent said they would be angry.

About the Survey

Yankelovich, a leading consumer research company, surveyed 1,001 adult women regarding their knowledge of heart disease and obesity. The survey was fielded via telephone from March 26-30, 2009. Completed interviews are weighted by four variables: age, gender, geographic region, and race, to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total female U.S. adult



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population. The survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percent. The survey is part of the Heartfelt Moments Obesity Health Education Campaign, which is sponsored by Allergan, Inc., developers of the LAP-BAND AP® Adjustable Gastric Banding System, and is initiated in partnership with WomenHeart, a leading non-profit national organization dedicated to advancing women's heart health.

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1 The American Heart Association. Heart Disease Education, Analysis and Research, and Treatment for Women Act. Available at <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3039322>. Accessed 2/17/09.

2 Weight-Control Information Network (NIH). Statistics related to overweight and obesity. Available at <http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov/statistics/>. Accessed 4/8/09.

3 Madala MC, Franklin BA, Chen AY, Berman AD, Roe MT, Peterson ED, Ohman EM, Smith SC, Gibler WB, McCullough PA. Obesity and Age of First Non-ST-Segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction J. Am. Coll. Cardiol., September 16, 2008; 52: 979 - 985.

4 Atkinson R, Hubbard V. Report on the NIH Workshop on Pharmacologic Treatment of Obesity. Am J Clin Nutr. 1994; 60: 153-6.

5 NIH Technology Assessment Conference Panel. Methods for voluntary weight loss and control. Ann Intern Med 1993; 119 (7pt 2):764.