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NEW SURVEY SHOWS AFRICAN-AMERICANS ARE CONCERNED WITH HEART HEALTH BUT UNAWARE OF LINK TO BRAIN HEALTH

Alzheimer's Association and American Heart Association Join Forces to Educate African-Americans on Managing Heart Health to Promote Brain Health

(CHICAGO) Feb. 12, 2008 – A recent survey commissioned by the Alzheimer's Association and the American Heart Association found that, among African-Americans, two out of three (61 percent) expressed concern about developing heart disease, and two out of five (40 percent) expressed concern about developing Alzheimer's. However, only about one in 20 (6 percent) are aware that heart health is linked to brain health.

February is Black History Month and American Heart Month, so the Alzheimer's Association is teaming up with the American Heart Association. Their goal is to educate African-Americans that by managing their cardiovascular risk, they may also strengthen their cognitive health. This first-time strategic alliance will kick off in February and extend through May, which is American Stroke Month.

Compared to the general public, African-Americans have a higher risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and other cardiovascular complications, which could lead to a higher risk of stroke and Alzheimer's disease.

“What's good for your heart is good for your brain,” says Jennifer Manly, Ph.D., Alzheimer's Association spokesperson. “Every healthy heartbeat pumps about one-fifth of your blood to your brain. The human brain comprises billions of brain cells that need a constant source of nutrients and oxygen, which are carried in the blood so that the brain can carry on the daily processes of thinking, problem solving and remembering. Impaired heart function could lead to impaired brain function.”

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“By the year 2030, the number of African-Americans age 65 or older is expected to more than double to 6.9 million,” said Emil Matarese, M.D., American Heart Association spokesperson. “Although Alzheimer’s is not part of normal aging, age is the greatest risk factor for Alzheimer’s disease. So it is important that African-Americans take steps now to decrease their risk of heart disease, which research has shown could also decrease the risk of cognitive decline.”

Did You Know?

- Compared to the general public, African-Americans have a higher risk of diabetes, high blood pressure and vascular dementia.
- More than 40 percent of African-Americans have high blood pressure and are at risk for stroke, which can lead to greater risk for developing Alzheimer’s.
- African-Americans, as a group, are at greater risk for heart disease and stroke.
- Every year more than 100,000 African-Americans have a stroke.
- Having high cholesterol increases the risk for stroke and may increase the risk for Alzheimer’s.

Survey Results

- African-Americans are concerned about the risk of both heart disease and Alzheimer’s.
 - One-third (33 percent) of African-Americans report being diagnosed with high blood pressure, and about one in five (22 percent) report being diagnosed with high cholesterol.
 - Large majorities of African-Americans have been diagnosed or are personally concerned about cardiovascular disease and other related conditions. Diseases and levels of concern are: high blood pressure (74 percent diagnosed or concerned); heart disease (65 percent diagnosed or concerned); and high cholesterol (64 percent diagnosed or concerned).
 - Two out of five (40 percent) African-Americans are concerned about developing Alzheimer’s. Over one-quarter (28 percent) know a family member or friend who has it.
- More than half of African-Americans (54 percent) know that they are at greater risk for heart disease, but fewer than one in ten (8 percent) know that they have a higher risk of developing dementias such as Alzheimer’s.
- Fewer than one in 10 African-Americans know that cardiovascular disease and other related diseases are linked to Alzheimer’s, including:
 - Heart disease linked to Alzheimer’s (6 percent aware)
 - High blood pressure linked to Alzheimer’s (8 percent aware)
 - Diabetes linked to Alzheimer’s (6 percent aware)
 - High cholesterol linked to Alzheimer’s (5 percent aware)
- Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of African-Americans report doing things in their lives specifically for heart health. This includes:
 - Eating heart healthy foods (46 percent)
 - Exercising (44 percent)
 - Managing their weight (40 percent)

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- Fewer, though still half (50 percent) of African-Americans, report doing things in their lives specifically for brain health, especially:
 - Staying mentally active by doing puzzles (43 percent)
 - Staying socially active (36 percent)
 - Eating “brain healthy” foods (35 percent)

Steps You Can Take To Control Your Risks

- Watch your numbers
 - Blood pressure – desirable blood pressure is less than 120/80 mmHg
 - Blood sugar – desirable fasting blood sugar is less than 100 mg/dL
 - Body weight – keep your body weight in the recommended range
 - Cholesterol – desirable total cholesterol is less than 200 mg/dL
- Make healthy lifestyle choices:
 - Stay mentally active.
 - Remain socially involved.
 - Stay physically active.
 - Reduce your intake of fat and cholesterol.
 - Don’t smoke.

Visit www.alz.org/heartbrain or call the American Stroke Association, a division of the American Heart Association, at 888-478-7653 or the Alzheimer’s Association at 800-272-3900 and you’ll receive a free brochure with heart and brain health information and a pedometer, while supplies last.

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Editor’s Note:

The American Stroke Association’s Power To End Stroke cause campaign speaks to African-Americans about their increased risk for stroke. For information visit strokeassociation.org/power or call 1-888-4STROKE.

About the Alzheimer’s Association

The Alzheimer’s Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer’s disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer’s. For more information, visit www.alz.org.

About the American Stroke Association

The goal of the American Stroke Association, a division of the American Heart Association, is to reduce disability and death from stroke through research, education and advocacy. In its 2006–07 fiscal year, the association invested more than \$152 million to fight stroke. To learn more, call 1-888-4STROKE or visit strokeassociation.org.

The Alzheimer’s Association and American Heart Association Survey

The Alzheimer’s Association and the American Heart Association poll, conducted by Richard Day Research, Inc. The nationwide survey was conducted online with a random sample of 1,210 African-Americans and 1,004 non-African-American adults, weighted to represent the full U.S. population of African Americans in terms of gender, age, and household income, and the full U.S. population of non-African Americans in terms of gender, age, household income, race, and ethnicity. The maximum margin of error for a random sample of this size among both African Americans and non-African Americans is +/- 3%.