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Boston University School of Medicine

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NEWS

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ROBINS RECEIVES GRANT TO STUDY EFFECTIVENESS OF TREATMENT TO RAISE HDL-CHOLESTEROL IN SUBJECTS WITH HEART DISEASE

Boston, Mass.--Sander J. Robins, M.D., an associate professor of medicine at Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) and the Director of Lipid Metabolism and the Atherosclerosis Clinic at the Boston Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center, is a co-principal investigator in a new study to determine if treatment to increase HDL-cholesterol--commonly called the "good cholesterol"--will decrease the incidence of heart attacks and death due to coronary heart disease. Robins and his colleagues will receive a total of \$1.8 million each year for the next seven years to conduct the study.

The trial is designed to study 2,500 men with pre-existing heart disease who have a low HDL-cholesterol level as their only cholesterol abnormality. Participants will be treated with the drug gemfibrozil, which raises HDL-cholesterol, or a placebo. Participants will then be observed for the development of new coronary events for a period of five to seven years.

Studies in a number of different populations have indicated that a low HDL-cholesterol level may be a greater risk factor for the development of coronary heart disease than a high total cholesterol or a high LDL-cholesterol--commonly called the "bad cholesterol." The researchers are investigating whether gemfibrozil, which is expected to raise HDL-cholesterol levels without appreciably affecting other kinds of cholesterol in this particular population, will decrease the rate of heart disease.

This controlled trial will begin in the spring. Twenty VA Medical Centers throughout the United States will participate in study, which is funded jointly by the VA and Parke-Davis Pharmaceutical Company.

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Robins received his undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College and his medical degree from Jefferson Medical College. His laboratory at the Boston VA Hospital is currently funded by the National Institutes of Health to study the mechanisms by which cholesterol is secreted in bile and by the VA to study the mechanisms by which changes in the lecithin composition of plasma lipoproteins regulate the metabolism of plasma lipoproteins.

This study is one of many administered by the Cooperative Studies Program at the VA under the direction of Daniel Deykin, M.D., chief of the Cooperative Studies Program and a professor of medicine and biochemistry at BUSM.