

NEWS Release



For immediate release

Contact: Mark D'Antonio

mark.dantonio@ynhh.org

203.688.2493

Yale-New Haven Hospital establishes Aortic Institute

NEW HAVEN, CT - January 22, 2010 - A national leader in the research and treatment of cardiovascular diseases, Yale-New Haven Hospital (YNHH) today announced that it is establishing an Aortic Institute that will be dedicated to both clinical care of patients with thoracic aortic aneurysms and research of aortic diseases.

The new institute will be led by John A. Elefteriades, MD, chief of the section of cardiac surgery, William W.L. Glenn Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Yale School of Medicine, and an internationally known aortic surgeon and researcher.

"I'm delighted to lead the new Aortic Institute," said Dr. Elefteriades. "The multidisciplinary institute format will involve scientists from multiple specialties, including not only cardiac surgery, but also peripheral vascular surgery, epidemiology, molecular genetics, diagnostic imaging and engineering, as well as data management and nursing personnel. By identifying and incorporating such a team, who will work in physical proximity on a daily basis, we aim to accelerate our research efforts, as well as to expand our clinical reach to affected patients."

The Aortic Institute at Yale-New Haven Hospital is among the first, if not the very first, such formally designated institutes. Already one of the largest centers in the world for clinical care of patients with aneurysms, the Aortic Institute will expand its clinical and research roles for the future.

For more than a decade, Dr. Elefteriades and his research team at Yale have studied thoracic aortic diseases - including thousands of patient cases. Some clinical findings have been groundbreaking, as in the studies which define the behavior of the diseased aorta and establish

evidence-based guidelines for surgical repair, those which have demonstrated the genetic patterns of transmission of these diseases, and those which have identified the role of exertion and emotion in precipitating an acute aortic crisis.

"John Elefteriades' extraordinary research work in the area of thoracic aortic aneurysms is the foundation of what we know about the disease in the medical community today," said Peter Herbert, MD, chief of staff at YNHH. "Augmenting his research with newer and more sophisticated tests and expanding clinical research will help us better predict outcomes and understand aneurysms."

Among the first goals for the new institute is finalizing work conducted in collaboration with Celera Genomics in California. The Elefteriades team, via advanced research into the molecular genetics of thoracic aortic aneurysm disease, has developed a 31-RNA gene chip that is 85 percent accurate in determining - from a blood test only - whether a patient harbors a thoracic aneurysm. It is hoped that after further testing this gene chip test may become a widely applied screening test, like the PSA test for prostate cancer. The team has also recently identified DNA mutations that produce thoracic aortic aneurysms. As thoracic aortic aneurysm is a lethal disease, usually with no premonitory symptoms, Dr. Elefteriades and his team have always placed emphasis on making cardinal advances aimed toward identifying people at risk - before catastrophic rupture or dissection of the aorta.

The Aortic Institute also will aim to validate and commercialize inventions which utilize hypothermia to protect the spinal cord and brain from injury. Additionally, the Aortic Institute will be the home for the new multidisciplinary journal AORTA being started by Dr. Elefteriades and colleagues.

###

Yale-New Haven Hospital is a 944-bed, not-for-profit hospital serving as the primary teaching hospital for the Yale School of Medicine. Yale-New Haven was founded as the fourth voluntary hospital in the U.S. in 1826 and today, the hospital complex includes Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital and Yale-New Haven Psychiatric Hospital, with a combined medical staff of about 3,400 university and community physicians practicing in more than 100 specialties. Visit www.ynhh.org for additional information.