

## Study gives insight into cause of heart attacks in women

By Renee C. Lee  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS — Unusual fatigue and sleeplessness might be early warning signs of a heart attack in women, a study suggests.

The study, published Monday in the American Heart Association journal *Circulation*, surveyed 515 women who had heart attacks and found that 95 percent had such symptoms as much as a month before they were stricken.

Chest pains can be early indicator of a heart attack, but 43 percent of the women in the study said they never experienced chest discomfort, said researcher Jean C. McSweeney.

The study is the first time researchers have identified fatigue and sleeplessness as possible early warning signs of a heart attack in women.

"If we can get women to recognize the symptoms early, we can get them treatment and prevent or delay a heart attack," said McSweeney, a professor at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock. "That's why the early symptoms are significant."

The researchers said they do not know whether the findings also apply to men, who tend to have somewhat different symptoms when a heart attack strikes.

The study surveyed women ages 29 to 97 who had been released four to six months earlier from five hospitals in Arkansas, North Carolina and Ohio after suffering a heart attack. They were shown a list of 70 symptoms they may have experienced during the months leading up to the heart attack and were asked to rate them based on frequency and severity.

Almost all the women — 95 percent — said they had new or different symptoms more than a month before the heart attack that went away afterward.

The most common symptoms reported were unexplained or unusual fatigue, 71 percent; sleep disturbance, 48 percent; shortness of breath, 42 percent; indigestion, 39 percent; and anxiety, 35 percent. Only 30 percent said they experienced chest pain before the heart attack.

The women had more than just ordinary fatigue and sleeplessness.

"The fatigue is unexplained and unusual. They are more tired at the end of the day than they usually are," McSweeney said. "For some, it's so severe that they can't make a bed without resting as they tuck the sheets. It interferes with their normal activities."

The study emphasizes the need to educate patients and doctors about early warning signs, McSweeney said.

"Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women, yet women are more afraid of breast cancer. They don't realize heart disease is the thing they need to fear," she said.

Dr. Nieca Goldberg, a cardiologist at Lenox Hospital in New York, said the study could change the way doctors practice.

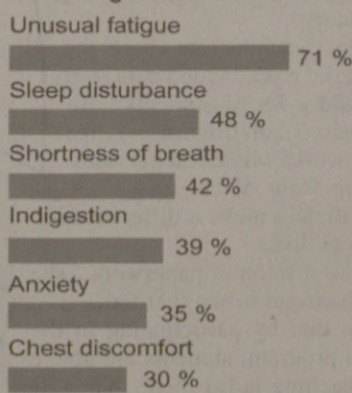
"If doctors are aware of the early warning signs, they will be more likely to accurately diagnose and take care of the problem before a heart attack and it could lead to better health care for women," Goldberg said.

### WOMEN'S HEALTH

#### Fatigue, a warning for heart attacks

Women who are at-risk of heart disease and have unusual fatigue or trouble sleeping could be experiencing an early warning sign of a heart attack, a study found. As many as 95 percent of women experienced some early symptoms. The survey studied 515 women.

#### Common early symptoms occurring before a heart attack



SOURCE: American Heart Association AP

Goldberg said women often are not accurately diagnosed because they may not have the classic symptoms seen in men. Those symptoms include pressure in the center of the chest that radiates down the arm or neck.

In contrast, women in the study described aching, tightness and pressure in the back or high chest.

## Jury being selected for Tech professor

By Betsy Blaney  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LUBBOCK, Texas — Jury selection began Monday in the trial of the Texas Tech University professor accused of lying to FBI agents about vials of missing plague bacteria and smuggling some of the potentially lethal germ into the country.

Dr. Thomas C. Butler, 62, faces 69 felony charges in connection with the incident that sparked a bioterrorism scare in West Texas earlier this year. President Bush was even briefed about the situation.

On Jan. 14, Butler reported 30 vials stolen. Within hours, scores of federal agents descended on the city and a frantic search for the vials ensued. It ended when Butler gave FBI agents a written statement in which he admitted a "misjudgment" in not telling his supervisor that the vials had been "accidentally destroyed," according to court records.

Prosecutors allege in the indictment that Butler smuggled plague samples from Tanzania in 2002 and illegally transported them. Other charges include theft, embezzlement and fraud.

Opening statements were expected to begin after the lunch break Monday.

Butler, who has pleaded innocent and said FBI agents tricked him into confessing to destroying the vials, faces life in prison and \$17.1 million in fines if convicted.

A gag order prohibits attorneys from discussing the case, but ana-

lysts say the jury's makeup is crucial.

"There are many people including psychologists and lawyers, who will see everything," said Mary O'Connor, chairwoman of the psychology department at Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City.

Butler has accused the government of wrongdoing.

In an interview with *Minutes* taped hours before a gag order was issued, Butler said FBI agents tricked him into saying he had destroyed the vials to calm the public's fears and close the case. He said agents told him he would not be charged.

One former FBI special agent, however, said that's not how agents handle interviews.

"They would not want to get a false answer just to please the public," said former Associate Deputy Director of the FBI, "Buck" Revell. "You can't make a promise about prosecution that you could not do that, and I doubt seriously that they did do that."

Others have been critical of the government in the case. Butler has no criminal record.

In August, the National Academy of Sciences protested Attorney General John Ashcroft about the federal investigation and Butler's prosecution. Ashcroft has been studying plague for more than 25 years and considered one of the world's foremost experts on the disease.

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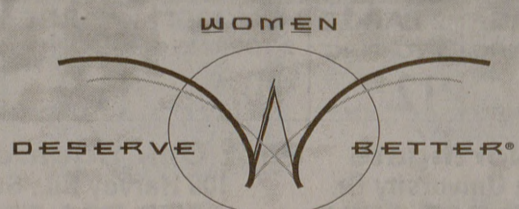
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