Top Ten Things to Know
Meditation and Cardiovascular Risk Reduction

1. More than 200 billion dollars are spent on care of patients with cardiovascular disease (CVD) in the U.S. annually and that amount is expected to increase 2- to 3-fold over the next several decades.

2. Novel and inexpensive interventions that benefit patients and can contribute to the primary and secondary prevention of CVD are of interest.

3. Several areas were examined to understand how meditation might reduce CV risk: neurophysiology and neuroanatomy, psychological, psychosocial and physiologic responses to stress, blood pressure, smoking and tobacco use, insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome, subclinical atherosclerosis, endothelial function, inducible myocardial ischemia, and primary and secondary prevention of CVD.

4. The mainstay of primary and secondary prevention of CVD is the ACC/AHA guideline-directed interventions.

5. Meditation may be considered an adjunct to guideline-directed CV risk reduction by those interested in this lifestyle modification, though the benefits of such interventions remain to be better established.

6. Studies in meditation and CV risk reduction have several methodological issues that make stroke recommendations on meditation as an adjunct treatment difficult.

7. Further research on meditation and CV risk is warranted due to non-compelling data.

8. For meditation studies going forward, methodological issues should be addressed:
   a. Randomized study design utilized
   b. Blinded adjudication of endpoints
   c. Adequately powered to meet the primary study outcome(s)
   d. Long-term follow-up included
   e. Less than 20% drop out rate
   f. Greater than 85% follow-up data
   g. Performed by investigators with no inherent financial or intellectual bias in outcome

9. The science of meditation as an adjunct therapy for the primary prevention, secondary prevention of CVD and CV risk reduction is modest at best and is not compelling enough to make strong recommendations for its utility in CV risk reduction.

10. Studies of meditation suggest a possible benefit on CV risk, but the overall quality and, in some cases, quantity of study data are modest.