Top Ten Things To Know
Fifteen Year Trends in Awareness of Heart Disease in Women: Results of a 2012 American Heart Association National Survey

1. Cardiovascular disease—and coronary heart disease, in particular—remains the leading cause of death among women in the United States (US).

2. This cross-sectional, national survey, has been conducted triennially since 1997 by the American Heart Association, and provides a longitudinal assessment of trends in heart disease awareness among ethnically diverse women.

3. The 2012 sampling included US women >25 years of age identified through random-digit dialing (n=1205) and Harris Poll Online (n=1227).

4. The awareness rate that heart disease is the leading cause of death in women nearly doubled in 2012 (56%) as compared to 1997 (30%).

5. The rate of awareness among black and Hispanic women in 2012 (36% and 34%, respectively) was similar to that of white women in 1997 (33%).

6. In 1997, women were more likely to cite cancer than CVD as the leading killer (35% versus 30%), but in 2012, the trend reversed (24% versus 56%).

7. The most common reasons why women took preventive actions were to improve health and to feel better, not to live longer.

8. Future CVD awareness and prevention efforts should focus on incorporating culturally relevant components into messaging and message delivery.

9. An emphasis on how lifestyle and preventive strategies may improve health and energy and help women feel better may resonate with many segments of women more effectively than a focus on longevity.

10. The women and heart disease movement can build on the gains in awareness that heart disease is the leading cause of death to encourage heart-healthy lifestyles as a leading strategy to feel better.

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