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SpectraCell Laboratories Offers Additional Test for Heart Attack and Stroke Risk

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Houston, TX- July 7, 2008. SpectraCell Laboratories has added an innovative blood test called Lp-PLA_2 (Lipoprotein-associated Phospholipase A_2) to its arsenal of advanced cardiovascular testing aimed at early detection of cardiovascular disease. The new test measures the amount of a specific enzyme in blood that occurs when there is an active atherosclerotic process that could lead to the rupture of plaque and cause a heart attack or stroke.

Lipid measurement and cardiac imaging cannot identify which patients have rupture-prone plaque with thin fibrous caps. Therefore, finding serologic markers with high specificity for advanced plaque is a useful diagnostic tool in cardiovascular risk stratification. The Lp-PLA_2 test helps physicians to identify patients who would benefit from more aggressive therapy and is especially recommended for intermediate and high-risk patients.

Once thought to be a simple process caused by the deposition of too much cholesterol in the arteries, atherosclerosis now appears to be a condition where the arterial lesions are inflamed, eventually leading to plaque rupture causing a heart attack or stroke. Lp-PLA_2 is associated with a doubling of cardiovascular risk.

"What makes Lp-PLA_2 so unique is that it is very specific to vascular inflammation, making it an excellent indicator of active atherosclerosis, which is otherwise difficult to detect through conventional methods," states Dr. Jan Troup, PhD, Director of Lipid Science at SpectraCell. "It tells a doctor that the risk of MI or stroke is higher due to developing vulnerable plaque. Doctors can use this information to modify treatment strategies determined by lipoprotein particles alone."

Since stroke is the leading cause of disability and third leading cause of death in America, early detection and prevention is key, especially since 68% of heart attacks and strokes occur from blood clots, not narrowing of the arteries.

Although Lp-PLA_2 is an inflammatory marker, it is not affected by inflammation that might occur from infection or injury. This makes Lp-PLA_2 a more specific marker than the more familiar CRP (C-Reactive Protein) which can be elevated from systemic infection, even when the vascular walls are healthy. High Lp-PLA2 in combination with high hs-CRP increases the risk level four fold.

Since 50% of all heart attacks occur in patients with normal cholesterol values, the Lp-PLA_2 test is often used in conjunction with advanced lipoprotein tests. SpectraCell's LPP+™ combines advanced cholesterol testing with additional independent risk factors such as Lp-PLA_2, hs-CRP, insulin and homocysteine. It is typically covered by standard insurance and Medicare.

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About SpectraCell Laboratories – SpectraCell is a CLIA accredited laboratory that services healthcare providers nationwide by providing advanced clinical testing with the patent pending **LPP™** (Lipoprotein Particle Profile) and **FIA™** (Functional Intracellular Analysis) and tests.

SpectraCell's **LPP™** testing is the most advanced lipoprotein test available. Unlike traditional cholesterol tests, SpectraCell's LPP™ directly measures the number of several classes of lipoprotein particles providing an accurate assessment of cardiovascular risk.

SpectraCell's **FIA™** testing is an innovative assessment of a patient's nutritional status. Unlike traditional serum, hair and urine tests, SpectraCell's FIA™ measures how an individual's white blood cells function in specific nutritional environments. Over 30 vitamins, minerals, amino acids and antioxidants are evaluated. As a result, individual differences in metabolism, age, genetics, health, prescription drug usage, absorption rate and other factors are taken into consideration.

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