

[Hispanic News Article]

**Prominent Hispanic Cardiologist Leading Nationwide Study of
Investigational Treatment for Heart Disease
*Volunteers Needed for Largest Ever Chelation Study***

When one of Dr. Gervasio Lamas' patients asked him about the merits of an alternative treatment for heart disease called chelation therapy, the award-winning cardiologist immediately dismissed it.

That was seven years ago. Now, Dr. Lamas is the lead researcher of the largest study ever conducted on chelation therapy (pronounced key-LAY-shun), an investigational treatment for people with heart disease. The study, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, is the largest study of its kind.

After initially dismissing chelation therapy, Dr. Lamas felt compelled to analyze the existing published medical literature on the therapy and what he discovered was that there was not enough research to definitively tell his patient that chelation therapy does not work – nor was there enough to say that it does work. So, he designed a clinical study to find the answer.

“I owe it to my patients to do whatever it takes to give them the best advice possible, and I don't want to overlook a possible therapy just because it isn't considered a ‘mainstream’ treatment,” said Dr. Lamas. “This study will let patients know whether we should add chelation therapy to the list of proven treatments for heart disease.”

Many people with heart disease are already considering chelation therapy despite a lack of clear evidence that it works. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 60,000 people per year use chelation therapy as an alternative treatment.

The goal of the study is to test whether chelation therapy and/or high-dose vitamin therapy is effective for the treatment of heart disease. Chelation therapy is a process in which a synthetic or man-made amino acid called EDTA is delivered intravenously. EDTA binds with molecules, such as metals or minerals, and holds them tightly so that they can be removed from the body.

Ultimately almost 2,000 people with heart disease will take part in this important research study. They will be treated at more than 100 medical institutions across the country, including Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, Florida where Dr. Lamas is the director of cardiovascular research and academic affairs.

Study researchers are now focused on recruiting patients. They are looking for men and women age 50 and older who have had a heart attack. Those who participate will join a nationwide effort to learn whether chelation therapy works, helping the medical community find new and effective treatments for heart disease.

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Dr. Lamas especially encourages Hispanics to participate in the study. “Studies have shown that therapies don’t always impact different ethnicities the same way,” he explained. “We need to work as a community to make sure that Hispanics are equally represented in this study to help ensure that we identify any differences in Hispanics if there are any.”

There is no cost to participate in the study and participants will be closely monitored to ensure they receive the optimal standard of care for their heart disease, such as vitamin supplements and advice on lifestyle and diet. Participants will be randomly assigned to receive: either chelation therapy or placebo (saline) solution and either high-dose vitamin therapy or placebo pills. All participants will also receive low-dose vitamins.

More information about the study is available at the NIH National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine’s Web site at www.nccam.nih.gov/chelation or by calling 1-888-644-6226.

“Heart disease is the leading cause of death of Hispanics,” said Dr. Lamas. “We need to do everything we can to find answers about how to address this terrible disease.”

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This article is provided by the Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, Florida. As Florida’s largest private not-for-profit teaching hospital, Mount Sinai Medical Center is a distinguished leader in education and research. For more information, please contact 305-674-2162.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Photos of Dr. Gervasio Lamas and study participants are available upon request. Please contact Rebecca Leaf at 202-745-5100.