



Media Contact: Pam Garretson
973-971-4932
Pamela.Garretson@atlantichhealth.org

Morristown Memorial Hospital
100 Madison Avenue
Morristown, NJ 07962

For Immediate Release

MORRISTOWN MEMORIAL STUDY SHOWS ASSOCIATION BETWEEN GUM DISEASE AND HEART DISEASE

MORRISTOWN, NJ, OCTOBER 5, 2007 – Patients with heart disease are more likely to also suffer from gum disease and tooth loss, according to a study conducted by David Goteiner, DDS, FACD, FICD, a periodontist at Morristown Memorial Hospital. The study was published in the September issue of the Journal of the New Jersey Dental Association.

The study included 137 patients who were brought to Morristown Memorial Hospital's Emergency Department for heart attacks or angina, a condition caused by a lack of blood to the heart muscle, which causes pressure in the chest. These patients were then admitted to Morristown Memorial and treated in the Cardiac Care Unit. They were compared with another 37 patients who were discharged from the Emergency Department with a diagnosis of chest pain and another group of 101 who entered the hospital for elective procedures.

"Poor dental care, or a lack of it, may be associated with a cardiac event," Goteiner said. "My hope is the results of the study will not only convince people to regularly visit their dentists, but also will provide physicians with another tool to detect heart disease early so patients can quickly receive treatment."

Goteiner, working with Barnet Eskin, MD, an Emergency Department physician at Morristown Memorial, examined the dental and medical records of the patients and compared them to the diagnoses the patients received in the Emergency Department. They found that the patients diagnosed and admitted with heart complications had more gum disease and fewer teeth than those who were discharged from the Emergency Department.

The patients who were admitted to Morristown Memorial with either heart attack, angina, or chest pain said they had not visited a dentist, on average, within the past 6 months and have additional untreated dental problems. Patients who entered the hospital for elective procedures averaged 3 months.

"This study provides important information and shows that patients with poor dental care may be at an increased risk of coronary disease and coronary events," said cardiologist Jonathan Sussman, MD. "The findings, which are consistent with other data gathered on this topic, may highlight an important intervention to decrease cardiac risk."

(more)

T H E P A S S I O N T O L E A D

According to the American Academy of Periodontology, 75 percent of the United States' population has gum disease, of which 30 percent may be genetically susceptible to gum disease. In another study, Goteiner found that this gene was found in 50 percent of the heart attack and angina patients entering the Emergency Department. Nearly 9 million people will experience angina in the U.S., while nearly 16 million people will have heart attacks, according to the American Heart Association.

###

ABOUT MORRISTOWN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Part of Atlantic Health (atlanticealth.org), Morristown Memorial is a non-profit 629-licensed-bed hospital in Morristown, NJ., with more than 1,200 physicians. Morristown Memorial's specialties include cardiology and cardiac surgery, adult and pediatric oncology, critical and emergency care and inpatient rehabilitation and neonatal intensive care services. Morristown Memorial is also a Level II Regional Trauma Center and a Level III Regional Perinatal Center. Home to the largest cardiac surgery center in the state, Morristown's other services include the Goryeb Children's Hospital, Carol G. Simon Cancer Center, and Atlantic Rehabilitation Institute. In 2008, Atlantic Health will complete the new Gagnon Heart Hospital, a 250,000 square-foot facility that will consolidate all cardiovascular services at Morristown Memorial Hospital. Morristown Memorial is designated as a Magnet Hospital for Excellence in Nursing Service, the highest level of recognition by American Nurses Credentialing Center available to facilities that provide acute care services.

The hospital is accredited by The Joint Commission. Atlantic Health is the primary academic and clinical affiliate in New Jersey of Mount Sinai School of Medicine and The Mount Sinai Hospital.