

World Atrial Fibrillation Awareness Day – It's About Time!



Atrial Fibrillation (AF) is the most common cardiac arrhythmia with approximately 2-3 million cases in US and an additional 25 million plus worldwide. The prevalence of AF is probably underestimated due to under diagnosis. AF is relatively uncommon before the age of 60 years, but affects 10% of population over the age of 80 years. There are a multitude of causes for AF and there are ever emerging Risk Factors that are being studied. The future estimate of prevalence of this condition is increasing drastically, thus the need to spread the awareness among people. Despite the advances in recent times, the efforts that are going on to educate and diagnose people with this condition in early stages are not adequate enough. This warrants an action now than ever before to coordinate such efforts worldwide and this where GAFA is striving to spread the awareness of the condition

in general population, so that people are aware of AF and is also acting as a proactive tool in involving patients in their health care decisions regarding treatment of AF.

The challenges that we face today in dealing with AF are similar to the ones we faced years back in dealing with Coronary Artery Disease. In fact AF can be characterized as the electrical equivalent of Coronary Artery Disease, which occurs due to mechanical obstruction or functional stenosis of coronary arteries. With the impact AF has on a global scale it is high time for us to fold the sleeves and get to work towards better awareness, early diagnosis and treatment. Thousands of debilitating strokes can be saved by empowering people with the knowledge to recognize the condition and provide them opportunities for timely and

appropriate care. Billions of dollars in lost revenue, outpatient and inpatient care related to every step of managing AF can be saved through better education. It's high time that the stakeholders in this fight against AF got ready with a new weapon – Awareness of the disease.

The efforts of Global Atrial Fibrillation Alliance (GAFA), a non-profit organization which brought patients, physicians and industry together in the unified campaign against AF. GAFA strives to promote AF awareness globally and brings international collaboration of great minds to contribute to meaningful research and successful treatment methods. GAFA is proud to have as members, leading Electrophysiologists, Researchers and other healthcare providers from across the globe working with patients to provide people and families who have been affected by AF with adequate knowledge through the most current news and developments in research, information on prevention, management, and their treatment of AF, and explore alternate forms of AF management.

As the first step forward, **World Atrial Fibrillation Awareness Day** has been observed on the 2nd Saturday of September each year all over the

world. It is observed to create global momentum for better education and treatment.

In its inaugural year, World Atrial Fibrillation Day was observed on September 8th of 2012, where a community awareness Yoga and 5K Run event was successfully organized in two cities in US at Kansas city, Kansas and Glendale, Arizona. This event was organized by the Global Atrial Fibrillation Alliance (GAFA), a not for profit physician-patient-industry partnership working towards improving Atrial Fibrillation awareness around the world.

World Atrial Fibrillation Day is an opportunity for people to learn the facts about AF and use this knowledge to make educated healthcare choices for themselves and their loved ones affected with AF and raise awareness in your community on a global front. My hearty congratulations to the organizers of the event. I welcome others to join this movement to see a world free of Atrial Fibrillation.

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