

Moderator: What can you tell us about chest pain? How do you know if it is a lupus attack or another disease like heart attack?

Dr. Esdaile: It is very interesting and I did not show you the data but what we found is angina (chest pain), a warning sign for coronary disease and pre-heart attack, is underrepresented in lupus women or lupus patients. So patients are having many more heart attacks, but they are not having symptoms of angina. What I suspect is misdiagnosis. If you are a doctor looking at a 35 year old woman and if you thought about it you would say she is having symptoms of angina; but you think it is not medically possible for a 35 year old woman to have angina. I hope with time the physician population recognizes that it can happen. Chest pain is very common. It is also one of the most difficult to treat, because doctors can start chasing their tails and give more and more prednisone; but the chest pain is not going to get better with more prednisone. Sometimes I will use anti-inflammatories like Celebrex and don't use stronger medication to treat the pain.