Abstract:
Triptans are widely used in clinical practice for the acute treatment of migraine with and without aura. All triptans are serotonin (5-hydroxytryptamine) 1B/1D agonists and can cause coronary as well as cerebral vasoconstriction. Absolute contraindications are well-known including documented coronary artery disease and peripheral vascular disease. However, many patients may have undetected coronary artery disease or be at risk for stroke and this risk should be taken into account when prescribing triptans. Additionally, the health of our patients including their risk for cardiovascular events can change as we continue to care for them over their lifetime. A careful re-evaluation of our patients on follow-up visits to identify those who should not be given triptans is advisable.

In this presentation, a review of the effects of the triptans on the cardiovascular system will be done including a look at receptor density in the coronary and cerebral vessels, the amount of expected vasoconstriction of coronary arteries after a triptan is taken, and the effect on human arteries and veins from the thoracic wall. An explanation to explain "chest symptoms" as a side effect of migraine treatment with triptans will be discussed. Published data on reported triptan cardiovascular events will be examined and put into relative and absolute risk comparing cardiovascular events in the general population. Lastly, screening tools such as the ASCVD (Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease) Risk Calculator will be reviewed. The importance of continued vigilance in our patients on triptans for the new development of coronary artery disease or the identification of patients at high risk for coronary artery disease will be emphasized including the need to communicate with patients’ other providers including primary care and cardiology in making treatment decisions.

References:

At the conclusion of this presentation, attendees should be better able to:
- Define the effects of the Triptans on the Cardiovascular System
- Examine published data on triptan cardiovascular adverse events
- Discuss screening of patients for cardiovascular risk & appropriateness for triptan usage