

# HEART CONGRESS, VASCULAR BIOLOGY AND SURGEON'S MEETING

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## *Alfred Sparman*

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### **The epidemiological shift and current economic environment warrant new approaches to the treatment of risk factors for cardiovascular disease**

In the last decade we have seen a significant epidemiological shift which has led to an increase in the incidence of noncommunicable chronic diseases. Statistics indicate that cardiovascular disease, once believed to be a disease of affluent countries, is the leading cause of death worldwide affecting both developing and developed countries. Apart from the change in the epidemiological environment, changes in the economic environment have also led to additional challenges. For some patients, especially those living in countries with limited resources; the picture is an overwhelming one, as this translates into limited access to adequate healthcare services, standard treatments and therapies. Not exempt from the negative effects of cardiovascular disease, those living in poorer countries may find it difficult to access standard therapies, such as statin therapy, and so these patients frequently do not meet their treatment goals, which results in poor treatment outcomes and an undesirable quality of life. Faced with the dilemma of whether to treat their disease or feed their families, many patients turn to biologically based therapies as an alternative. The use of complementary and alternative medicine has also increased among patients living in developed countries. Biologically based therapies specifically, have become a popular choice as adjunct to conventional medicine, with 38% of American adults reportedly using complementary and alternative medicine. The National Health Interview Surveys indicate that of the 38% using complementary and alternative medicine in 2007, 36% were affected by cardiovascular disease. The survey also indicated that the majority of these patients do not inform their doctors of their choice to use these treatments, and so places their health at risk. The treatment of cardiovascular disease with complementary and alternative medicine has and continues to be a controversial issue. However, the increased accessibility to information by way of the internet has created a culture of self-referral with patients becoming increasingly open to the use of biologically based therapies. As such, it may be time for medical and healthcare professionals to increase their knowledge of these therapies, their viability, current research and the need for increased, clinically sound research in these areas as healthcare systems, and patients alike, face escalating financial challenges.

### **Biography**

Dr. Alfred Sparman, an interventional cardiologist and pioneer of angioplasty in Barbados, is the CEO of one of the premier healthcare facilities in the Caribbean. With years of experience in the field of cardiology and a successful practice at The Sparman Clinic and 4H Hospital, Dr. Sparman continues to build on his knowledge of chemistry and research. In addition to his clinical practice, Dr. Sparman enjoys hosting a weekend radio program "Living with the Doc", a medical and social awareness program which focuses on health, treatments, patient experiences and disease management.

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