Coronary Disease Seen in Diabetes Before Age 40

ATLANTA — Two-thirds of young adults with diabetes who were aged 40 years or younger had significant coronary artery atherosclerosis, on the basis of comprehensive coronary CT examinations of 134 such patients at one U.S. medical center.

When compared with more than 3,500 similarly aged young adults without diabetes, patients with diabetes also had an adjusted, fourfold increased prevalence of coronary atherosclerosis, Dr. Nikhil Daga and his associates reported in a poster at the annual meeting of the American College of Cardiology.

These findings run counter to current recommendations of the American Diabetes Association that does not include diabetes mellitus as a criterion for determining eligibility for coronary CT examinations on 3,711 people aged up to 40 years, including 130 patients with diabetes and 3,581 people without diabetes. The average age of the entire group was 36 years, and 54% were men.

The study presumed that the presence of any coronary calcium indicated significant atherosclerosis.

The CT examinations revealed a low coronary calcium score of 1.99 in 52% of the patients and in 24% of those without diabetes. An intermediate score of 100-399 occurred in 12% of those with diabetes and in 2% of people without diabetes. A high score of 400 or greater occurred in 4% of those with diabetes and in 0.5% of those without diabetes. Overall, 68% of the patients with diabetes had some degree of coronary artery calcification, compared with a 27% prevalence in people without diabetes.

Dr. Daga said that he had no disclosures. Among his associates, the only disclosure was from Dr. Matthew Budoff, who is on the speakers bureau for General Electric, a company that markets CT equipment.