Transcript Details
This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: https://reachmd.com/programs/clinicians-roundtable/why-is-pah-still-diagnosed-late/84960/

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Why Is PAH Still Diagnosed Late?

Announcer:
Welcome to *Clinician's Roundtable* on ReachMD. On this episode, we'll hear from Dr. Ali Ataya, who's a Professor of Medicine in the University of Florida Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care, and Sleep Medicine, as well as the Director of the Pulmonary Hypertension Program and the HHT and Rare Lung Disease Program. He'll be discussing diagnostic delay in pulmonary arterial hypertension care. Here's Dr. Ataya now.

Dr. Ataya:
From the time their symptoms start until they're officially diagnosed, there's still a significant delay in diagnosis and initiation of treatment.

Symptoms may start very vaguely. A lot of the symptoms may be just some fatigue and exertional shortness of breath that over time gets worse. So initially, they may be misdiagnosed. They're told that it's due to deconditioning or perhaps another disorder like asthma. Often, they're treated for other conditions, and the PAH continues to progress over time.

And by the time it becomes more serious, they get evaluated with an echocardiogram down the line, and we find out that they have pulmonary hypertension, only then do they get referred to a PAH specialist or a PAH center, where they undergo thorough evaluation and treatment.

And despite a lot of awareness in the community and the utility of echocardiograms, we still see a lot of patients being diagnosed late in their disease. The average time between symptom onset and diagnosis is anywhere between 18 months to two years in some patients. And you can imagine that patients get more complex and they have other comorbidities. For example, we have an aging population here in Florida, so sometimes older patients get misdiagnosed or PAH gets overlooked just because of their age and their other comorbidities. So their disease doesn't get truly, correctly diagnosed until much later.

So these are the challenges a lot of patients have to deal with. And this is unfortunately a progressive illness. We still do not have a cure for PAH. We have a lot of good treatments to help symptoms and a lot of treatments that may be disease modifying now, with the newer therapies, but as of yet, no cure. So a lot of patients may end up going on multiple combination treatments in order to get improvements in their symptoms. And rarely, sometimes, some patients may even need a lung transplantation as well.

Announcer:
That was Dr. Ali Ataya talking about the challenges of diagnosing pulmonary arterial hypertension. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit *Clinician's Roundtable* on ReachMD.com, where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening!

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