Sauna use improves heart health

A recent study shows that using a sauna improves cardiovascular health. Results were published in the May 15, 2002, issue of the Journal of the American College of Cardiology.

"Repeated sauna treatment improves vascular endothelial and cardiac function in patients with chronic heart failure," showed that patients' clinical symptoms were improved in 17 of 20 cases after two weeks of sauna therapy.

Twenty patients who had experienced chronic heart failure sat in a dry sauna at 60 degrees for 15 minutes and then rested on a bed, covered with a blanket, for 30 minutes daily for two weeks. A control group comprised 10 patients who had experienced chronic heart failure and who were placed on a bed in a temperature-controlled room for 45 minutes daily for two weeks.

Using high-resolution ultrasound, researchers measured the diameter of the brachial artery at rest and during reactive hyperemia, as well as after sublingual administration of nitroglycerin. Cardiac function was evaluated by measuring the concentrations of plasma brain natriuretic peptide (BNP).

"We hypothesized that the sauna restores endothelial [flat cells that line the blood and lymphatic vessels, the heart, and other body cavities] function and then improves cardiac function," the researchers stated.

—Karen Menehan

ISPA earns association honor

The International SPA Association (ISPA) has been elected to the 2002 Associations Advance America Honor Roll, a national awards competition sponsored by the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE).

ISPA received the award for its Hands of Hope Relief Fund, which was organized to raise money for the United Way September 11 Fund (see "Hands of Hope," SpaMassage News, March/April 2002). Through Hands of Hope, ISPA members were asked to donate 10 percent of all sales made on Nov. 11, 2001, to the September 11 Fund.

Hands of Hope was announced on Oct. 16, during ISPA's Annual Conference, which meant ISPA members had less than four weeks to form their ideas and put a plan in place. More than 40 members heeded the call for action and raised more than $13,000 for the fund, according to an ISPA press release.

Now in its 12th year, the Associations Advance America Awards program recognizes associations that propel America forward. "ISPA's program truly embodies the spirit of the Associations Advance America campaign. It is an honor and an inspiration to showcase this activity as an example of the many contributions associations are making to advance American society," said ASAE President Michael S. Olson.

ISPA membership is comprised of more than 1,800 health and wellness facilities and providers from 54 countries.

"Spending money on your people is equally as important as budgeting to bring in new clients. You can attract hundreds of patrons to the spa, but if you don't have a staff to do the services, what good is that? The most important thing is to make sure your therapists are happy."
