Antiphospholipid Syndrome (APS)

Antiphospholipid Syndrome or APS is an autoimmune disorder in which the body produces antibodies against normal blood components. Individuals with these antibodies are prone to developing blood clots in both the veins and arteries. This may lead to heart attacks, strokes, miscarriages, pre-term labor, still birth or pre-eclampsia. APS may occur in individuals with systemic lupus, other autoimmune diseases or in otherwise healthy individuals. Antibodies are proteins in the blood and body fluids that attached themselves to bacteria or viruses. This helps the immune system remove them from the body.

The most common event in someone with APS is a blood clot in the leg or a Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT). The most common arterial event is a Stroke. It is believed the 1-5% of the general population may have APS. Of those who are affected by APS, 75-90% of those individuals are women. Women pose an increased risk of DVT or clot formation if currently being treated with Estrogen-based hormones, such as birth control pills or hormone replacement therapy. Other forms of birth control should be discussed with their health care provider.

There is no cure for APS, but there is treatment to help prevent clots from forming. Treatment with anticoagulants or blood thinners are the only treatment available to prevent DVT or other clots forming in the body. Proper management of blood thinners can be managed by an individual's primary health care provider. For further information on this Syndrome can be obtained from the National Institute of Health or from the APS foundation of America, Inc.

References

APS Foundation of America, Inc. available from: http://www.apsfa.org/aps.htm

National Institute of Health. Available from: http://ghr.nlm.www.nih.gov