Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC): A follow-up study of early arterial lesions in the general population

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The Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) Study is a prospective study sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, presently underway in four U.S. communities. Its goals are to 1) investigate the etiology of and natural history of Atherosclerosis, 2) investigate the etiology of clinical atherosclerotic diseases, and 3) measure variation in cardiovascular risk factors, medical care and disease by race, sex, place, and time.

The ARIC Study takes place in four diverse communities. The communities are clearly defined geographical entities, have well delineated medical care referral patterns, and provide an opportunity to study blacks and whites, males and females in urban and rural settings.

The design was chosen so that data could be obtained for groups which differ by geography, race, and socio-economic status. The ARIC study is not designed to select a representative sample of the entire population. Each community provides information on the occurrence of coronary heart disease in a unique environmental setting. The cohorts representing each community are studied so that inferences about risk factors and disease relationships can be made from diverse population groups. This diversity permits the evaluation of the consistency of any observed association.

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