

Dr. Christopher Cannon of Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, who conducted the angiogram research, said he thinks the results of both studies should immediately be put into practice.

Other doctors said the results may indeed change medical care, but they cautioned that doctors will need time to sort out the findings. They also noted that many small hospitals cannot perform angiograms.

The results of both studies were released at a meeting in New Orleans of the American Heart Association. The cholesterol-lowering drug study was sponsored by Pfizer, which makes Lipitor, while the angiogram study was financed by Merck, which makes one of the medicines used in the research.

Heart disease might come from deficiency of mirth

The Associated Press

BALTIMORE – A good laugh may be good for the heart.

A team of Maryland medical researchers found that people with heart disease were 40 percent less likely to laugh in humorous situations than those with healthy hearts.

“The old saying that laughter is the best medicine definitely appears to be true when it comes to protecting your heart,” said Michael Miller, director of the Center for Preventative Cardiology at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

It is uncertain, however,

whether humor helps prevent heart problems or whether people with heart problems tend to lose their senses of humor.

“That question would be more interesting, but it would also be much harder to answer,” said Dr. Rose Marie Robertson, a Vanderbilt University cardiologist and president of the American Heart Association.

The study of 300 people – half of whom had histories of heart problems – used questionnaires to gauge how healthy people and those with heart disease differed in their responses to situations where humor was expected.