

The American Heart Association  
2011 Population Research Prize

Presented to

Elizabeth Barrett-Connor, MD, FAHA  
Distinguished Professor and Chief, Division of Epidemiology  
Department of Family and Preventive Medicine  
University of California-San Diego School of Medicine  
La Jolla, California

Introduced by

Gordon F. Tomaselli, MD, FAHA  
President, American Heart Association/American Stroke Association  
Dallas, TX  
Professor and Director, Division of Cardiology,  
Johns Hopkins University, School of Medicine  
Baltimore, MD

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For her highly relevant discoveries of many critical indicators of cardiovascular disease risk, amassed during a career of extraordinary achievement that has profoundly enhanced preventive medicine, extending and enriching lives worldwide.

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SCRIPT FOR 2011 SCIENTIFIC SESSIONS (POPULATION RESEARCH PRIZE)

Now it's my pleasure to present the American Heart Association's annual prize honoring outstanding accomplishment by the leader of a major population research laboratory.

This year's winner is a recognized authority on factors contributing to the risk of acquiring heart disease and stroke, with a particular focus on gender differences and diabetes. I'm pleased to announce that the Population Research Prize for Two Thousand Eleven goes to— Doctor Elizabeth Barrett-Connor of the University of California--San Diego.

Our prizewinner is Distinguished Professor and Chief of the Division of Epidemiology in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine at U-C San Diego. Doctor Barrett-Connor joined the faculty there in Nineteen Seventy, and during the ensuing four decades has achieved an extraordinary record as one of the world's pre-eminent epidemiologists. Her voluminous findings have had an enormous positive impact on scientific thinking and on medical practice.

Doctor Barrett-Connor is founding director of the highly acclaimed Rancho Bernardo Heart and Chronic Disease Study, now in its fortieth year. This project has provided a steady flow of studies identifying causal factors for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and osteoporosis. She currently is or has been the principal investigator of several other important multi-center clinical trials, including the Postmenopausal Estrogen-Progestin Interventions study, the Heart and Estrogen-Progestin Replacement Study, and the Diabetes Prevention Program Follow-up Study. And she led the largest cardiovascular disease prevention trial ever conducted in women who had cardiovascular disease or diabetes.

Doctor Barrett-Connor's pioneering investigations have provided vital insights into many aspects of healthy aging, with a strong emphasis on gender differences and women's health. Landmark studies led by her have affirmed the risks associated with elevated blood fats, obesity and cigarette smoking; and found that diabetes poses a greater threat to women than to men. She was among the first to question the validity of earlier studies, including her own, suggesting that hormone replacement therapy protects the female heart. This challenge to conventional wisdom, validated by the Women's Health

Initiative, exemplifies hallmarks of her work: excellent study design, rigorous scientific discipline, and a rare ability to detect flaws in common, well-accepted assumptions.

Add to this scientific rigor a large helping of humor that's part of a unique personal style and you have a snapshot of Elizabeth Barrett-Connor in action. As everyone who's acquainted with her knows, she shows that the serious work of science can also be fun.

Doctor Barrett-Connor's work has been cited repeatedly with major honors, including this Association's Research Achievement Award. Among other recent kudos are the National Osteoporosis Foundation Living Legacy Award, the North American Menopause Society Award and the Clinical Investigator Award of the Endocrine Society. And she has contributed widely through many invited lectureships and professorships, such as the Jan L. Kellermann Memorial Lecture at the 15th World Congress on Heart Disease, and the A-H-A's Distinguished Scientist Lecture. Her extensive volunteer service includes a term chairing the A-H-A Council on Epidemiology and Prevention.

There's evidence, too, of ongoing momentum in her work. At the time she received this Association's Research Achievement Award, in Two Thousand and Three, she had published six hundred and ten scientific reports. Now, just eight years later, that total is eight hundred and eighty five! Slowing down is not in her performance playbook!

Barrett-Connor began her academic career after graduation from Cornell University Medical College in Nineteen Sixty. After additional training in Dallas and Miami, she studied at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and taught at the University of Miami School of Medicine for five years before joining U-C San Diego.

She chaired the U-C-S-D's Department of Family and Preventive Medicine from Nineteen Eighty-One to Nineteen Ninety-Seven.

These years of splendid service and her on-going achievements make my task today highly appropriate. It is my honor to present the American Heart Association Population Research Prize for Two Thousand Eleven to a distinguished scientist, teacher and world leader in C-V-D prevention for healthy aging (*pause*): Doctor Elizabeth Barrett-Connor.  
Congratulations!                   ###