



Provider Profile

EDWARD COVERSTONE, *Physician-Researcher*

Edward Coverstone, MD, of Mercy South admits that one of the factors that got him into medicine was his love of puzzles: analysis and problem-solving.

"I like the immediate gratification," he says. "I guess it's a little ironic that I ended up dealing with cardiovascular issues, since that's a lifelong condition."

After his initial training at Duke University School of Medicine, he did cardiovascular specialization training at Washington University in St. Louis, where he spent an extra year in cardiovascular genetics. The experience led him to working with a mentor who was pursuing the genetic risk factors in cardiovascular disease.

"I spent seven years in her lab looking at the genes that make people susceptible to valve disease and heart attacks," he says.

One of the most effective ways of predicting heart disease, heart attack and stroke is identifying the genetic markers connected to the production, buildup and metabolizing of low-density lipoprotein or LDL, commonly known as "bad cholesterol." If the body can't metabolize LDL properly, the chances of developing heart disease are higher.

Dr. Coverstone is currently one of the primary site investigators on a study undertaken in collaboration with pharmaceutical manufacturer Novartis on an injectable drug - a PCSK-9 inhibitor - that inhibits the production of Lipoprotein A. Lipoprotein A is increasingly seen as a major risk factor in developing vascular disease. One of his subjects is Alvin Riney.

"Alvin was a prime candidate," says Dr. Coverstone. "Multiple events and a long genetic history of heart disease. We're very glad to have his participation."

The ongoing multiyear study is huge, with well over 9,000 participants across the world. But Mercy brings something unique to the study, making it an attractive research partner.

"We have at our fingertips a unique data set that compares genetics and family history to heart disease outcomes and clinical outcomes," he says. "Mercy makes for a perfect setup."

But there's something else that makes working with Mercy Research special, Dr. Coverstone says.

"A huge part of Mercy's approach is overall wellness and risk reduction," he says. "We're not only in the business of research—we're also a health care provider. And in that capacity, we can give them all the advantages we have. We look at our subjects as patients, and we can bring lots of different specialist expertise to bear on each patient's case. We can recommend not only medications, but also different techniques, like regular exercise and the Mediterranean diet, that can improve our patients' heart health - and their lives."

"Our work doesn't stop with injectable drugs and PCSK-9 inhibitors. It also involves giving everything else we have to positively affect our patients and outcomes," he added.