HEART LINE
by Eugene B. Reyes, MD

NO MORE HEART ATTACKS

My father died at the age of 65 because of a massive heart attack. The arteries in his heart were severely blocked that even the best doctors in the country at that time failed to open up those blocked arteries. He was a diabetic, and although he received the best treatment, I guess it didn't help him much.

I considered his death premature and a big loss. So every now and then, I ponder—could I have prevented his death? Of course if you believe in destiny, you would say "of course not!" Science, on the other hand, will say "YES!" A lot of drugs are now available which are very effective in controlling and preventing the blockage of the heart arteries.

So how come people still die of heart attacks? My short answer: it's because you are not taking charge. All of us are supposed to be in charge of our own health. Whatever happens to you, you are accountable and no one else. You are not in charge if you allow the disease to progress.

How does someone allow the progression of heart disease? One clear scenario is when someone refuses to consult a doctor simply because he is scared of knowing what is wrong with him. A second scenario is when someone refuses to accept that he has it, like hypertension for example. Denying it will leave the condition uncontrolled and untreated. Accepting it will empower him to control it. A third scenario is when someone refuses to comply with prescribed lifestyle changes and medications.

So, it is not us doctors who prevent the disease. It's actually the patients themselves. We just guide you. You have the power to stop it. You can stop heart attacks!

The Philippine Heart Association is the national organization of cardiologists in the country. It has more than 1,400 members spread all over the country. Try to see one and be empowered to prevent heart disease—or be guided by me through this column.

True or False:
The are many drugs that are now available which are very effective in controlling and preventing the blockage of the heart arteries.

Email your answer and/or suggest a topic of interest for our column to heartline.philheartassoc@yahoo.com and get a chance to win a brand new Merck Manual of Medical Information—Home Edition.

Dr. Eugene B. Reyes is the current PHA president. He is a heart doctor who is involved in Medical education, Cardiovascular research development and Advocacy projects that target the grassroots. His hospital affiliations are UP-Philippine General Hospital and Manila Doctors Hospital.

Heartline is an initiative of the PHA with global healthcare company MSD in their shared commitment to raise awareness on heart diseases and related illnesses. For more information, visit the PHA website at www.philheart.org.