Ohio State to study coronary disease

Ohio State University has been designated one of four national centers in a $20 million federal research program on the causes of arteriosclerosis — coronary artery disease.

The disease, the chief killer of adults in the United States, results from the buildup of fatty deposits along the inside walls of blood vessels.

Drugs and bypass surgery are used to control or bypass the blockages, but OSU project head J. Fred Cornhill said little is known about the cause of the buildup and how the blockages develop.

To answer these questions, researchers at the four centers will study the heart, aorta and coronary arteries of 3,000 dead trauma victims, aged 15 to 35, to determine the extent of fatty deposits and lesions. The research will span seven years.

It is in the 15-35 age period, Cornhill said, when the first indications appear of fatty deposits that could lead to serious disease.

A pilot study at OSU showed a progression from early lesions to more-advanced types, Cornhill said, but there is no proof the progression is steady or inevitable.

As part of the program, a library will be established at OSU to hold more than 100,000 slides, X-rays and items of information gathered in the inspection of trauma victims.

In addition to the four centers, 12 other universities will be involved in selected research. The project is being financed by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.