METHODS

Study Participants
We included all individuals free of clinically recognized cardiovascular and cancer disease, recruited in the MOLI-SANI study (24-30). Briefly, the MOLI-SANI project is a cohort study, started in March 2005. Participants, men and women aged ≥35, living in Molise, a Southern Italian region, were randomly recruited from city-hall registries. Up to April 2010 24,325 subjects were recruited at baseline. Exclusion criteria were pregnancy at the time of recruitment, disturbances in understanding or willingness, current poly-traumas or coma, or refusal to sign the informed consent. We excluded participants with a previous personal history of cardiovascular disease (heart attack, angina, stroke, transient ischemic attack, coronary bypass, angioplasty, or other cardiovascular surgery, 6%) or cancer (3%), those with missing value for D-dimer or other relevant variables (14%) or lost at follow-up (5%). The final study sample consisted of 17,639 individuals. The mean age of subjects was 55±11 years and 47% were men. The cohort was followed-up for mortality for any cause for a median of 4.2 years (max 6.5 y). Follow-up based on the mortality regional registry was from the baseline examination until death or 31 December 2011 for persons staying alive.

The ascertainment of vital status was carried out through linkage with demographic rosters, to identify the date of death. For deceased subjects, families were asked to confirm and about cause of death. Moreover, death certificates were retrieved; these report the initial and underlying causes of death and were coded according to the International Classification of Diseases, ninth Revision (ICD-9). In-hospital death were also checked through regional hospital discharge databases by record linkage to the MOLI-SANI database.

On 31/12/2011, in the whole MOLI-SANI cohort (n=24,325 subjects) a total of n=596 deaths were recorded. The number of deaths in the sample (n=17,639) included in the present study was 280. The MOLI-SANI study complies with the Declaration of Helsinki and was approved by the Catholic University ethical committee. All participants enrolled provided written informed consent.

Risk Factor Ascertainment
Cigarette smoking was defined by self-report of currently smoking every day or some days and having smoked >100 cigarettes in their lifetime. Body mass index (BMI) was calculated as weight (kg) divided by height (m) squared. Socio-economic status was defined by a score based on 6 variables (education, housing, ratio between the number of live-in partners and the number of rooms - both current and in the childhood - and availability of hot water at home in the childhood); the highest the score, the highest the level of socio-economic status. Physical activity was assessed by a structured questionnaire and expressed as
daily energy expenditure in metabolic equivalent task-hours (MET-h). Pre-hypertensive status was defined if diastolic or systolic pressure ranged in 90-95/140-160 mmHg; hypertensive status was defined if diastolic or systolic pressure was ≥95 or ≥160 mmHg or by the use of anti-hypertensive medications. Pre-diabetic status was defined if glucose level ranged in 110-126 mg/dL; diabetic status was defined if glucose level was ≥126 mg/dL or by the use of relevant medications. Pre-hypercholesterolemia status was defined if total cholesterol level ranged in 200-240 mg/dL; hypercholesterolemia status was defined if total cholesterol level was ≥240 or by the use of relevant medications. Blood pressure was measured by an automatic device (OMRON-HEM-705CP) three times on the non-dominant arm, with the patient lying down for about 5 minutes. Serum lipids and blood glucose were assayed by enzymatic reaction methods using an automatic analyzer (ILab-350). LDL-cholesterol was calculated according to the Friedewald formula. White blood cells (WBC) were counted by a Coulter LH Hematology analyzer (Becker-Coulter, Brea, CA). High sensitivity (hs) CRP was measured in fresh serum samples within 3 hrs from collection. A latex particle enhanced immunoturbidimetric assay (IL-Coagulation-Systems ACL9000, IL, Milan, Italy) was used. D-dimer was measured on fresh citrated plasma by an automated latex-enhanced immunoassay (HemosIL-IL, Milan). Quality control was maintained using internal laboratory standard in-house plasma pool. Inter and intra-day variability coefficients were 5.4% and 7.6%, respectively.

**Statistical Methods**

Baseline characteristics were presented as numbers and percentage, or mean values and standard deviation or geometric means and 95% confidence interval (for triglycerides, glucose, C-reactive protein and white blood cell). The baseline associations between quartiles of D-dimer and baseline covariates (means or percents) were assessed and adjusted for age and sex using linear models. Hazard ratios of death for D-dimer, modelled as quartiles or continuous variables, were calculated using the following Cox proportional hazard models: (1) crude, (2) adjusted for baseline age and sex and (3) additionally adjusted for other risk factors: baseline body mass index, hypertensive, diabetics and dyslipidemic status (no, pre, yes; modelled by dummies variables with no as referent), usual alcohol intake (gr/day), smoking status (current, ex, never), exercise (MET-h/wk, continuous), and score of social status (continuous). Another model added CRP and WBC. In supplemental analyses, we also modelled D-dimer as a continuous variable on its natural scale and as an ordinal variable with values of 0, 1, 2 and 3 representing successive quartile groups. The data analysis was generated using SAS/STAT software, Version 9.1.3 of the SAS System for Windows©2009. SAS Institute Inc. and SAS are registered trademarks of SAS Institute Inc., Cary, NC, USA.
APPENDIX

Moli-sani project Investigators

Steering Committee: Licia Iacoviello, Chairperson, Maria Benedetta Donati and Giovanni de Gaetano (Campobasso, Italy), Simona Giampaoli (Roma, Italy)

Safety and data monitoring Committee: Jos Vermylen (Leuven, Belgio), Chairman, Ignacio De Paula Carrasco (Roma, Italy), Enrico Garaci (Roma, Italy)

Event adjudicating Committee: Deodato Assanelli (Brescia, Italy), Francesco Alessandrini, Vincenzo Centritto and Sergio Storti (Campobasso, Italy), Paola Muti (Roma, Italy), Holger Schünemann (Hamilton, Ontario, Canada), Pasquale Spagnuolo and Dante Staniscia (Termoli, Italy)

Scientific and organizing secretariat: Francesco Zito (Coordinator, Campobasso and Termoli, Italy), Americo Bonanni, Chiara Cerletti, Amalia De Curtis, Augusto Di Castelnuovo, Licia Iacoviello, Roberto Lorenzet, Antonio Mascioli, Marco Olivieri and Domenico Rottilio (Campobasso, Italy)

Data management and analysis: Augusto Di Castelnuovo, Coordinator, Antonella Arcari, Marialaura Bonaccio, Floriana Centritto (till December 2008), Simona Costanzo, Romina di Giuseppe and Francesco Gianfagna (Campobasso, Italy)

Informatics: Marco Olivieri (Coordinator), Maurizio Giacci, Antonella Padulo (till September 2008) and Dario Petraroa (till September 2007) (Campobasso, Italy)

Biobank and biochemical analyses: Amalia De Curtis (Coordinator), Sara Magnacca, Federico Marracino (till June 2009), Maria Spinelli, Christian Silvestri (till December 2007), and Cristina Vallese (till September 2008) (Campobasso and Termoli, Italy)

Genetics: Daniela Cugino, Monica de Gaetano (till October 2008), Mirella Graziano, Iolanda Santimone, Maria Carmela Latella (till December 2008) and Gianni Quacquaruccio (till December 2007) (Campobasso, Italy)

Communication and Press Office: Americo Bonanni (Coordinator), Marialaura Bonaccio and Francesca De Lucia (Campobasso, Italy)

Moli-family Project: Branislav Vohnout (Coordinator) (till December 2008), Francesco Gianfagna, Andrea Havranova (till July 2008), Antonella Cutrone (till October 2007) (Campobasso, Italy)

Recruitment staff (Campobasso and Termoli, Italy): Franco Zito (General Coordinator)

Secretariat: Mariarosaria Persichillo (Coordinator), Angelita Verna, Maura Di Lillo (till March 2009), Irene Di Stefano (till March 2008)

Blood sample: Agostino Pannichella, Antonio Rinaldo Vizzarri, Branislav Vohnout (till December 2008), Agnieszka Pampuch (till August 2007)

Spirometry: Antonella Arcari (Coordinator), Daniela Barbato (till July 2009), Francesca Bracone, Simona Costanzo, Carmine Di Giorgio (till September 2008), Sara Magnacca, Simona Panebianco (till December 2008), Antonello Chiovitti (till March 2008), Federico Marracino (till December 2007), Sergio Caccamo (till August 2006), Vanesa Caruso (till May 2006)

Electrocardiogram: Livia Rago (Coordinator), Daniela Cugino, Francesco Zito, Alessandra Ferri (till October 2008), Concetta Castaldi (till September 2008), Marcella Mignogna (till September 2008); Tomasz Guszcz (till January 2007)

Questionnaires: Romina di Giuseppe, (Coordinator), Paola Barisciano, Lorena Buonaccorsi, Floriana Centritto (till December 2008), Francesca De Lucia, Francesca Fanelli (till January 2009), Iolanda Santimone, Anna Sciarretta, Maura Di Lillo (till March 2009), Isabella Sorella (till September 2008), Irene Di Stefano (till March 2008), Emanuela Plescia (till December 2007), Alessandra Molinaro (till December 2006), and Christiana Cavone (till September 2005), (Campobasso and Termoli, Italy)

Call Center: Giovanna Galuppo (till June 2009), Maura Di Lillo (till March 2009), Concetta Castaldi (till September 2008), Dolores D’Angelo (till May 2008) and Rosanna Ramacciato (till May 2008) (Campobasso, Italy)