



Statins ineffective for dementia

Clinical Question

How effective are statins in the treatment of dementia?

Bottom Line

Compared with placebo, there was no benefit from statins seen with the primary outcome measure, Alzheimer's Disease Assessment Scale (ADAS) - cognitive subscale (ADAS-Cog) or the Mini Mental State Examination. There was no significant difference in behaviour, global function or activities of daily living in the statin and placebo groups. All participants had a diagnosis of probable or possible Alzheimer's disease (AD) according to standard criteria and most participants were established on cholinesterase inhibitors. Participants' ages ranged from 50 to 90 years, and treatment was given for at least six months. There were no significant differences in adverse effects between treatment and placebo groups.

Caveat

The review contained only four studies, involving 1154 participants. There were no studies assessing the role of statins in the treatment of vascular dementia.

Context

The use of statin therapy in established AD or vascular dementia is a relatively unexplored area. Hypercholesterolaemia has also been implicated in the pathogenesis of vascular dementia. Due to the role of statins in cholesterol reduction, it is biologically plausible they may be efficacious.

Cochrane Systematic Review

McGuinness B et al. Statins for the treatment of dementia. Cochrane Reviews. 2014, Issue 7. Art. No.: CD007514. DOI: 10.1002/14651858. CD007514.pub3. This review contains four studies involving 1154 participants.

STATEMENTS/DISCLAIMERS

PEARLS summarise Cochrane reviews that are relevant to primary care. They contain the minimal information required for a clinician to either use an effective treatment or stop using an ineffective treatment. Where available they will contain numbers needed to treat and to harm.

PEARLS are created to assist with the dissemination of Cochrane reviews.

PEARLS are developed for trained health professionals in primary care. They are educational only and not meant to advise on specific clinical treatment.

PEARLS are developed by the Department of General Practice, University of Auckland, the Co-convenors of the Cochrane Primary Care Field New Zealand Branch of the Australasian Cochrane Centre and funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Health.