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
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