

Dispatch: Statins Before Heart Attack? Maybe Not.

By ACSH Staff — June 29, 2010

A recent [meta-analysis](#) [1], which combines and analyzes the results of multiple studies, casts doubt on the use of statins to reduce the risk of death in patients without heart problems but who have an increased risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Statins are drug therapies that reduce blood cholesterol levels and have effectively reduced further complications in patients who have already experienced heart disease.

ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross says, "This large meta-analysis is far from the final word on the benefits of statins in primary prevention of cardiovascular disease. No meta-analysis — by definition, a retrospective mashup of multiple studies with varying populations, interventions, and timeframes — can be definitive. Further, even on the authors' own terms, this analysis had a mean follow-up period of less than four years — a small snapshot of the common duration of statin therapy. And most telling, if one looks at the graphics in the article, it's easily seen that there is a clear downward trend in total mortality in the statin-treated cohort, although by strict criteria it does not quite meet the accepted definition of statistical significance."

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[1] <http://www.latimes.com/news/science/la-sci-statins-20100629,0,7388273.story>