

A statin a day keeps the doctor away?

This article published in the British Medical Journal takes a fresh look at a very interesting question, namely “can a healthy lifestyle be as good in reducing cardiovascular risk for death as taking cholesterol lowering medications (statins)?” The authors use a very sophisticated model to project the benefits and risks of taking a daily statin medication as opposed to eating a fiber rich apple a day. The results show that an apple a day can reduce the risk for cardiovascular deaths as well or slightly better than cholesterol lowering statin medications. The impact on population health outcomes assumes that there is complete patient compliance with either taking medications or daily apple eating. The apples are certainly tastier, have fewer side effects and are less costly than statin medications.

Editorial: This is a statistical model and not an actual study. It does point out that medications are not without risks of side effects and that leading healthy lifestyles are overwhelmingly better than substituting medication for good nutrition and exercise. Please note that these statements apply to large populations. Individual decisions regarding medications should be discussed with your healthcare provider and taken in context of your personal risk factors.

Bibliography

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