

Statin Use Is Linked to Lower Risk of Lethal Prostate Cancer

Researchers think that statins' anti-inflammatory effects may be responsible for this association.

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Men who take a medication from the cholesterol-lowering statin class have a lower risk of lethal fatal prostate cancer but not prostate cancer overall, according to a new study.

Researchers from Queen's University Belfast, Trinity College Dublin and the Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center conducted a prospective study analyzing statins' association with prostate cancer among 44,126 men participating in the Health Professionals Follow-up Study who were cancer-free in 1990.

The participants were followed through 2014 to determine whether they were diagnosed with prostate cancer. Twice annually their statin use was assessed.

"Some prostate cancers are slow-growing and will not affect the man over the course of his lifetime, but others are aggressive and often deadly," the study's lead author, Emma Allott, PhD, of the Centre for Cancer Research and Cell Biology and the Institute for Global Food Security at Queen's University Belfast, said in a press release. "My work is to understand the biology driving these different types of prostate cancer in order to reduce the number of men who develop this lethal form of the disease."

Publishing their findings in *Clinical Cancer Research*, the study authors found that during 24 years of follow-up, the men were diagnosed with 6,305 cases of prostate cancer, 801 (13%) of which were lethal—either metastatic at diagnosis or metastatic and fatal during follow-up.

Compared with never using statins or having used them in the past, current statin use was associated with a 24% lower risk of lethal prostate cancer but no difference in the overall risk of prostate cancer. Current statin use was associated with a 60% lower risk of PTEN-null cancers (meaning they lack the PTEN gene) but no difference in the risk of PTEN-intact cancers.

The researchers found evidence that statins may affect inflammation and immune activity in the prostates of some men and may also have an effect on the characteristics of prostate tumors.

"Our findings are in agreement with some of the known biology of statins but are the first to observe these effects in prostate cancer," Allott said.

“While we are not recommending that men start taking statins unless prescribed to do so, this study provides us with building blocks to further explore how statins could be used to combat aggressive prostate cancer in the future,” said Robert O’Connor, PhD, head of research at the Irish Cancer Society.

To read a press release about the study, [click here](#).

To read the study abstract, [click here](#).

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