

Insufficient evidence for statins in age-related macular degeneration

Clinical question	How effective are statins in delaying the onset and/or progression of age-related macular degeneration (AMD)?
Bottom line	In the one completed trial, the analyses of 30 participants showed no statistically significant difference between the simvastatin and the placebo arm in visual acuity at 3 months of treatment or 45 days after the completion of treatment. The lens and retina status were unchanged during and after the treatment period for both groups. In the ongoing trial, the preliminary analyses of 42 participants who completed 12 months' follow-up did not show a statistically significant difference between the simvastatin and the placebo arm in visual acuity, drusen score or visual function (effect estimates and confidence intervals were not available).
Caveat	There were only 2 small studies, one of which is still ongoing.
Context	AMD is a progressive late onset disorder of the macula that affects central vision. Although AMD is the leading cause of blindness in people over 65 years in industrialised countries, ¹ its pathogenesis is not clearly understood. Recent epidemiologic, genetic and pathological evidence has shown AMD shares a number of risk factors with atherosclerosis, leading to the hypothesis that statins may exert protective effects in AMD.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Gehlbach P et al. Statins for age-related macular degeneration. Cochrane Reviews 2009, Issue 3. Article No. CD006927. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD006927.pub2. This review contains 2 studies involving 72 participants.
PEARLS No. 212, November 2009, written by Brian R McAvoy	

[References]

1. Congdon NG et al. JAMA 2003;290:2057-60

PEARLS are succinct summaries of Cochrane Systematic Reviews for primary care practitioners. They are funded by the New Zealand Guidelines Group.

PEARLS provide guidance on whether a treatment is effective or ineffective. PEARLS are prepared as an educational resource and do not replace clinician judgement in the management of individual cases.

View PEARLS online at:

- www.cochraneprietarycare.org