

GEMs offer brief updates from general practice research tackling the challenges of front-line practice.

Statin use and risk of liver cancer: Evidence from two population-based studies

Peter Murchie

The clinical problem tackled by this research

Previous studies have suggested that statin use may affect risk of liver cancer but have been small, and have not effectively controlled for potential confounders such as high cholesterol and chronic liver disease. Consequently, this issue cannot be discussed with confidence with patients when GPs are initiating treatment with these very commonly prescribed drugs. Our research question therefore was “Does statin use affect the risk of liver cancer?”

What this research tells us about this problem

In this analysis of two large, independent studies risk of hepatocellular carcinoma was cut in half with statin use. These results can facilitate discussion of risk and benefit with patients when GPs are initiating treatment with these commonly prescribed drugs. With liver-cancer incidence and mortality rising worldwide, these results may also offer a future avenue for prevention.

The research team (*GPs)

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Suggested WISE action

Share this additional benefit of statins at a practice meeting your multidisciplinary team. Consider discussion prompts for the risks and benefits of statins within a practice template.

Where you can read more about this work

Tran KT, McMenamin UC, Coleman HG, Cardwell CR, Murchie P, Iversen L, Lee AJ, Thrift AP. Statin use and risk of liver cancer: Evidence from two population-based studies. *Int J Cancer* 2019; DOI: 10.1002/ijc.32426
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