
Statins Reduce Risk of Cancer in Heart Failure Patients



New findings published in the European Heart Journal report that statin use among patients with heart failure is associated with a 16% lower risk of developing cancer compared with non-statin users. Findings also show that statin use was associated with a 26% reduced risk of dying from cancer.

There is sufficient clinical evidence to show that heart failure patients are at a greater risk of developing cancer. However, to date, there is very little information about the association between statin use and the risk of developing or dying from cancer in patients with heart failure.

Researchers analysed data from 87,102 patients who were admitted to the hospital with heart failure. Patients were followed up until they were diagnosed with cancer, died or until the end of the study period, whichever came earlier. Of the patients included in the analysis, 36,176 were statin users, while 50,926 were non-users. 4.4% of patients died from cancer during the follow-up period.

Findings from this observational study report that the longer heart failure patients took statins, the greater was the reduction in their risk of developing cancer. Risk of developing cancer reduced by 18% in patients who remained on statins for four and six years and by 22% in those who took them for six or more years. The risk of dying from cancer also reduced by 33% in patients who took statins for four to six years and by 39% in those who took them for six or more years.

Deaths from any cause were lower among statin users compared to non-users. At the end of ten years, 60.5% statin users had died compared to 78.8% non-statin users. Statin use was associated with a 38% reduction in death from any cause compared to non-use.

According to the lead author of the study, Dr Kai-Hang Yiu, from The University of Hong Kong, "ten years after starting statins, deaths from cancer were 3.8% among heart failure patients taking statins and 5.2% among non-users – a reduction in the absolute risk of death of 1.4%. The reduction in the absolute risk of developing cancer after six years on statins was 22% lower compared to those who received only between three months and two years of statins."

The researchers highlight the importance of recognising the increasing incidence of cancer among heart failure patients and the possibility of reducing this incidence by using statins in these patients.

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