

U.S. Women Less Likely Than Men to Get Statins After Heart Attack



MONDAY, April 16, 2018 – Women who survive a heart attack are less likely than men to receive cholesterol-lowering statin drugs that can reduce the risk of another heart attack or stroke, a new study finds.

Researchers analyzed data on more than 88,000 U.S. adults who filled a statin prescription after a heart attack in 2014-2015. Of those, 56 percent of men and 47 percent of women picked up a high-intensity statin drug.

“Prior studies have found that women are less likely than men to receive treatment with statins following a heart attack. Our study shows that even when women are prescribed statins, these continue to be in lower intensities than the guidelines recommend,” said study leader Sanne Peters.

Peters is a research fellow in epidemiology at Oxford University’s George Institute in the United Kingdom.

“The discrepancies in high-intensity statin use may explain, at least in part, why [death] rates for women with a history of heart disease and stroke are higher than for men. Our research suggests some deaths could be prevented if the guidelines on treatment with high-intensity statins were adhered to,” she said in an institute news release.

The findings suggest efforts in recent years to close gender gaps in the use of recommended treatments after a heart attack have failed, according to the researchers.

Peters said the disparity was largest among the youngest and oldest adults, and for those without other known health problems.

Women's lower use of high-intensity statins was unrelated to age or to them having a higher number of other health conditions, the findings showed.

"We need further research to understand the barriers to guideline-recommended treatment in women," Peters said.

"There is clearly more work to be done to raise awareness of the benefits of high-intensity statins for both women and men who have experienced heart attacks, in order to eliminate these disparities," she concluded.

More information

The U.S. Office on Women's Health has more about women and heart attacks.



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