LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Impact of preoperative statin therapy on adverse postoperative outcomes in patients undergoing cardiac surgery: a meta-analysis of over 30,000 patients

We congratulate Liakopoulos et al.1 upon the publication of their meta-analysis and would be grateful that their result of early all-cause mortality strengthens that of our preceding meta-analysis.2 Their meta-analysis of crude odds ratio (OR) from 15 studies with 28,517 patients revealed a 43% reduction in mortality (OR 0.57; 95% confidence interval [CI] 0.49–0.67, P < 0.0001 for overall effect).2 It is similar to the statin therapy was associated with a 24% (representing 7205 patients) demonstrated a 41% reduction in mortality with preoperative statin therapy (OR 0.59; 95% CI 0.36–0.97, P = 0.04 for overall effect).3 In a meta-analysis of observational studies, to correct for and minimize selection bias that exists in observational studies, not crude but adjusted ORs would do better to be combined.

References

Hisato Takagi
Department of Cardiovascular Surgery
Shizuoka Medical Center
762-1 Nagasawa, Shimizu-cho, Sunto-gun
Shizuoka 411-8611
Japan
Tel: +81 559 75 2000
Fax: +81 559 75 2725
Email: kfgth973@ybb.ne.jp

and on behalf of the following co-authors
Hideaki Manabe
Norikazu Kawai
Shin-nosuke Goto
Takuya Umemoto

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Impact of preoperative statin therapy on adverse postoperative outcomes in patients undergoing cardiac surgery: a meta-analysis of over 30,000 patients: reply

We would like to thank Dr Takagi et al.1 for their comments that underscore the findings of our meta-analysis with regard to the favourable effect of statin treatment on the endpoint early all-cause mortality after cardiac surgery. In their systematic review,2 which exclusively included evidence from full-text publications of 19,542 cardiac surgery patients, the authors report a similar reduction in postoperative mortality following pooled analysis of crude odds ratios (ORs). Moreover, this favourable effect of a statin pre-treatment persisted even after accounting for adjusted ORs from included observational trials. Although this observation appears to further augment the benefits of a statin therapy prior to cardiac surgery, it should be taken into consideration that confounding variables adjusted for by multivariate analysis or propensity score matching varied among observational studies. Thus, the definite impact of a possible selection and treatment bias derived from this mainly observational data set remains unclear even after meta-analysis and, especially, with regard to the unequal preoperative use of other known cardioprotective agents such as β-blockers and aspirin that favours statin pre-treated patients.

Only a randomized, controlled trial, with pre-specified statin agents, doses, and clearly defined perioperative treatment periods, will warrant equal distribution of confounding variables among treatment groups and allow definite conclusions about the independent effects of a preoperative statin therapy on early adverse outcomes in cardiac surgery patients. We hope that the present debate will stimulate the initiation of such a trial to investigate these clinically relevant and important questions.

References

Oliver J. Liakopoulos
Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery
Heart Centre
University of Cologne
Kerpenerstrasse 62
Cologne

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