Adverse reactions to statins: Fact or fantasy

As many as one in three adults would benefit from lipid-lowering with a statin. Current guidelines advocate statin use for all patients with established atherosclerotic disease and, in primary prevention, for those at an estimated 10 year cardiovascular risk of 7.5-10%. In clinical practice, reports in the medical and lay press of the high frequency of putative adverse reactions to statins have influenced the uptake of statins by patients, not only in secondary prevention, but also in primary prevention, thereby exposing an increasing number of patients to the risk of preventable cardiovascular disease. In double-blind, randomized, trials adverse events are reported equally by those assigned statin or placebo, however, in open observational studies up to 20% of patients claim that adverse events, particularly muscle related symptoms, are associated with statin use. In order to further investigate this apparent discrepancy, the unique opportunity provided by over 10,000 patients participating in the Anglo-Scandinavian Cardiac Outcomes Trial Lipid-lowering Arm was used to compare adverse events associated with blinded use of statin in the first 3 years of the trial, with adverse events during open label statin use over the 2 year extension of the trial, using characterization and classification of events according to the Medical Dictionary for Regulatory Activities (MedRA) for the coding of reports. The results of these observations, which it is anticipated will have a major impact on clinical practice, including the prescribing of statins and their acceptability to patients, will be published shortly, and will be discussed in the presentation.

Biography
Peter Sever is Professor of Clinical Pharmacology at the National Heart and Lung Institute, Imperial College London. He graduated from the University of Cambridge and has a PhD from the University of London. He is Past President of the British Hypertension Society, current Joint Chief Editor of the Journal of the Renin-Angiotensin Aldosterone System and Honorary Fellow, Trinity Hall, Cambridge. His research interests include the aetiology and pathophysiology of vascular disease and clinical trials of cardiovascular disease prevention. He has published more than 350 papers in peer review journals.

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