



Minor elevated diabetes risk with statin use

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STATIN use is associated with a 9% increased risk of diabetes but overall side effects are uncommon, the largest meta-analysis to date has found.

Researchers reviewed safety data on seven statins from 135 studies published between 1985 and early this year, which included almost 250,000 patients.

Simvastatin and pravastatin had the best safety profile in the class, particularly when prescribed in low to moderate doses.

There was a 9% increased risk of diabetes and a 51% increased risk of transaminase elevations, particularly with higher doses of atorvastatin, fluvastatin, simvastatin as well as lovastatin, which is not registered in Australia.

However, there was insufficient evidence to evaluate the increased risk of diabetes over time.

The authors said the proven ability of statins to significantly cut mortality and hospitalisation rates in patients with heart disease outweighed the “small increase in diabetes risk”.

“Although the benefits of statins clearly outweigh risks at the population level, individualising such benefits and risks is more difficult,” the authors added.

No increased risk of myalgia, myopathy, rhabdomyolysis or cancer was found across the class.

Overall, the authors found that “as a class, adverse events associated with statin therapy are not common”.

Higher doses of atorvastatin and rosuvastatin were associated with increased odds of discontinuation. At higher doses simvastatin was associated with a fourfold increased risk of creatine kinase elevation.