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Statins for Everyone?

Nearly 80% of older adults would be eligible for statin therapy if JUPITER trial criteria were added to conventional criteria.

In the recently published JUPITER trial, rosuvastatin (Crestor) lowered risks for cardiovascular events among men (age, ≥ 50) and women (age, ≥ 60) who had high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (hsCRP) levels ≥ 2.0 mg/L and LDL cholesterol levels < 130 mg/dL ([JW Nov 18 2008](#)). However, based on [guidelines from the National Cholesterol Education Program \(NCEP\)](#), many of these patients would not receive statins. If the JUPITER selection criteria were applied to all middle-aged or older Americans, how many would become "eligible" for statin therapy?

In an analysis of data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) published in 2005, more than half of middle-aged or older Americans — 59%, 64%, and 65% of adults in their 50s, 60s, and 70s, respectively — had hsCRP levels ≥ 2.0 mg/L ([N Engl J Med 2005; 352:1611](#)). Now, in a new analysis of NHANES data, researchers estimate that 19% of middle-aged or older adults would become eligible for statin therapy, solely based on their hsCRP levels (≥ 2.0 mg/L). An additional 58% already are eligible for statins, based on traditional NCEP guidelines. Thus, about 77% of middle-aged or older Americans would be candidates for statins.

Comment: The benefits of rosuvastatin in JUPITER were statistically significant, although small in absolute terms. Because the JUPITER trial was stopped at 2 years, we don't know with certainty whether the favorable balance of benefits and harms persists during many years of statin therapy. Moreover, routine hsCRP screening in the messier "real world" of clinical medicine might not mimic the outcomes in JUPITER, from which people with other inflammatory conditions that raise CRP levels were carefully excluded. So, should more than three quarters of older Americans receive statins? That question has provoked controversy since the JUPITER results were released and cannot yet be answered confidently.

— [Allan S. Brett, MD](#)

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Spatz ES et al. From here to JUPITER: Identifying new patients for statin therapy using data from the 1999–2004 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. *Circ Cardiovasc Qual Outcomes* 2009 Jan; 2:41.