

MSU team studies connection between statins, tendon ruptures

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Michigan State University researchers are studying the role that statins - lifesavers for tens of millions of Americans trying to lower their cholesterol - play in causing disabling tendon ruptures.

Francesca Dwamena, an associate professor in the College of Human Medicine's Department of Medicine, is leading the study, which will analyze more than 100,000 Blue Care Network enrollees. The study is funded by a grant from the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation.

"Statins are such commonly prescribed medications, and the number of statin-users is on the rise," Dwamena said. "It is important for physicians and patients to be aware of all the risks. We need to find out definitively if statins predispose patients to this disabling complication."

While lowering cholesterol, [statins](#) also inhibit certain proteins that are required for remodeling of tendons, she said. Without remodeling, tendons become very prone to injury and potential rupture.

Dwamena and her team seek to confirm the findings from a pilot study that found increased tendon ruptures in women. Before that study, statin-induced tendon rupture was only described in case reports and post-marketing studies. With a large population-based outlook, the researchers also will assess the effects of dose, duration and type of statin on tendon rupture.

Blue Care Network enrollees between 2000 and 2009 will be included. The research team - which also includes Joseph Gardiner, chairperson of MSU's Department of Epidemiology, and internal medicine residents Abhimanyu Beri and Tahmeed Contractor - already has identified more than 30,000 statin users. They will be compared to more than 60,000 non-users.

Tom Fraser, a project manager at Blue Care Network, is helping with data extraction. The analysis is expected to take about one year.

This funding was obtained through the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation's "Physician Investigator Initiated Research Award Program." The award provides \$10,000 in seed money to investigate important issues related to the health and medical care of Michigan residents.

Provided by Michigan State University

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