

Study: Monitoring cholesterol increases life expectancy

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A University of Minnesota study definitively shows that those with decreased LDL cholesterol levels can count on an increased life expectancy. The research is published in the May 24 edition of the *Annals of Surgery*.

The findings stem from the Program on Surgical Control of the Hyperlipidemias (POSCH) [randomized controlled trial](#) which kicked off at the University of Minnesota in 1975. Researchers evaluated 838 heart attack survivors between the ages of 38-60. Of the 838, 417 patients were assigned to treatment with diet instruction only, and 421 to diet instruction plus a partial ileal bypass surgery, or bypass of the distal [small intestine](#) where cholesterol is absorbed.

Twenty five years later, University of Minnesota Medical School researchers found the group who had surgery increased life expectancy by about one year.

"This study contributes to a long path of findings from the POSCH trial, that is, high levels of LDL cholesterol are detrimental to your health," said Henry Buchwald, M.D., Ph.D., bariatric surgeon at the University of Minnesota Medical School, and principal investigator of the study.

Through the years, and through a number of high-profile published journal studies, the POSCH study has repeatedly shown that reducing high [LDL cholesterol](#) means fewer heart attacks, fewer deaths, less incidence of peripheral artery disease, and less heart disease.

"The POSCH trial was the first randomized controlled trial to show the life-sustaining benefits of cholesterol lowering and it is the only trial with 25 years of follow-up," Buchwald said.

Because of the advent of statins, the surgery is now relegated to a small minority of patients who have adverse effects to drugs.

Provided by University of Minnesota

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