

Cholesterol drug may have role in treating prostate cancer

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A drug commonly prescribed for people with high cholesterol may also be effective in treating prostate cancer, according to new research by Dr. Xiao-Yan Wen at St. Michael's Hospital.

Rosuvastatin—a statin drug sold as Crestor—suppressed the growth of transplanted human [prostate cancer](#) cells in mice.

"Our data provided solid pre-clinical evidence and a strong rationale for clinical trials of statins in the treatment of prostate cancer," said Wen, whose research appears in the September issue of *European Urology*, the journal of the European Association of Urology.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in Canadian men - one in seven men will develop the disease during his lifetime and one in 27 will die from it. Despite improvements in treatments such as surgery, radiation and chemotherapy, many patients still progress to advanced stages.

Recent clinical trials have shown encouraging results regarding the use of angiogenic inhibitors—substances that prevent the growth of blood vessels that feed tumors.

Wen and his colleagues in Canada and China screened 2,000 small molecules in zebrafish embryos with 2,000 small molecules. Seven compounds—four of them statins—slowed or prevented the growth of those blood vessels. They then decided to investigate the cancer-fighting

potential of one of those statins, [rosuvastatin](#), and found it suppressed the growth of prostate cancer in mice without apparent side effects.

If human trials confirmed that [statin drugs](#) can optimize the benefits of radiation, that would help doctors determine the most effective, less toxic and affordable treatments for their prostate cancer patients.

Provided by St. Michael's Hospital

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