

New cholesterol-lowering drugs are discussed by UB cardiologist and researcher

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The new statin alternatives, the class of drugs known as PCSK9 inhibitors, which are just coming onto the market, are a welcome addition for treating high cholesterol, said Stanley F. Fernandez, MD, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Medicine at the University at Buffalo School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

Fernandez is a site investigator at UB's Clinical and Translational Research Center, which is part of an international, multi-center study, funded by Amgen, which makes evolucumab, a PCSK9 inhibitor. The study will involve a total of 27,000 [patients](#) over five years and will look at the long-term clinical benefits of evolucumab, when it is given on top of currently available optimal medical therapy in patients at high-risk for atherosclerotic diseases.

"These drugs are important for a certain population of patients because they provide a significant drop in LDL, the 'bad cholesterol,' without the myalgia, or muscle pain that is seen in a subset of the population who take [statin drugs](#)," said Fernandez, who sees patients at UBMD, the physician practice plan of the UB medical school.

He noted that there will be "a learning curve" since for most cardiac patients, this will be the first [drug](#) that they must learn to inject. The injection method is very similar to what is required for diabetics, but these drugs are only injected once every two or four weeks.

The safety profile for the PCSK9 inhibitors so far has been excellent,

Fernandez said, noting that long-term studies, such as the one in which he is a site investigator, will be better able to assess any unexpected side effects of this new class of drugs.

Provided by University at Buffalo

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