

AHA: Evolocumab can help substantially reduce LDL

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(HealthDay)—Combining statins with the PCSK9 inhibitor evolocumab

can help reduce low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol to previously unseen levels, according to a study published online Nov. 15 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The research was published to coincide with the annual meeting of the American Heart Association, held from Nov. 12 to 16 in New Orleans.

Steven Nissen, M.D., chair of cardiovascular medicine at the Cleveland Clinic, and colleagues conducted a study involving 846 patients with [coronary artery disease](#). Half received [statins](#) alone, and others received monthly evolocumab via subcutaneous injection and statins.

The researchers found that when paired with a statin, evolocumab reduced LDL cholesterol levels by nearly 60 percent more than statins alone. About 81 percent of patients taking evolocumab and statins showed a reduction in arterial plaque volume. Side effects were similar to those reported by patients taking either statins or placebos, the researchers reported. Muscle aches, headache, fatigue, back pain, [high blood pressure](#), diarrhea, and dizziness were the most common side effects.

"Among patients with angiographic coronary artery disease treated with statins, addition of subcutaneous evolocumab, compared with placebo, resulted in a greater decrease in percent atheroma volume after 76 weeks of treatment," the authors write. "Further studies are needed to assess the effects of PCSK9 inhibition on clinical outcome."

The study was funded by Amgen, the manufacturer of evolocumab.

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