

Expert: Statin denial is an Internet-driven cult with deadly consequences

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Steven E. Nissen, MD, researcher, patient advocate, and chairman of cardiovascular medicine at Cleveland Clinic, says that Internet propaganda promoting bizarre and unscientific criticisms of statins has given these life-saving drugs a bad reputation. As a result, statin adherence rates are extremely low, despite their well-documented morbidity and mortality benefits. Dr. Nissen's commentary is published in *Annals of Internal Medicine* in response to an article about continuing statin prescriptions after adverse reactions.

People on the Internet with little or no scientific expertise suggest that statins are harmful while peddling "natural" remedies for elevated cholesterol levels. Dr. Nissen suggests that the widespread advocacy of unproven alternative cholesterol-lowering therapies began with the passage of the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA) of 1994. DSHEA places the responsibility for ensuring the truthfulness of [dietary supplement](#) advertising with the Federal Trade Commission, not the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. As such, manufacturers of these products commonly imply benefits that have never been confirmed in formal clinical studies.

While consumers are easily seduced by claims of a cure through supplements or fad diets, these claims have no basis in science. What research does show is that discontinuation or nonadherence to statins can have deadly consequences. Physicians need to work together with the media to educate the public about the dangers of [statin](#) denial.

More information: *Annals of Internal Medicine* (2017).
<http://annals.org/aim/article/doi/10.7326/M17-1566>

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