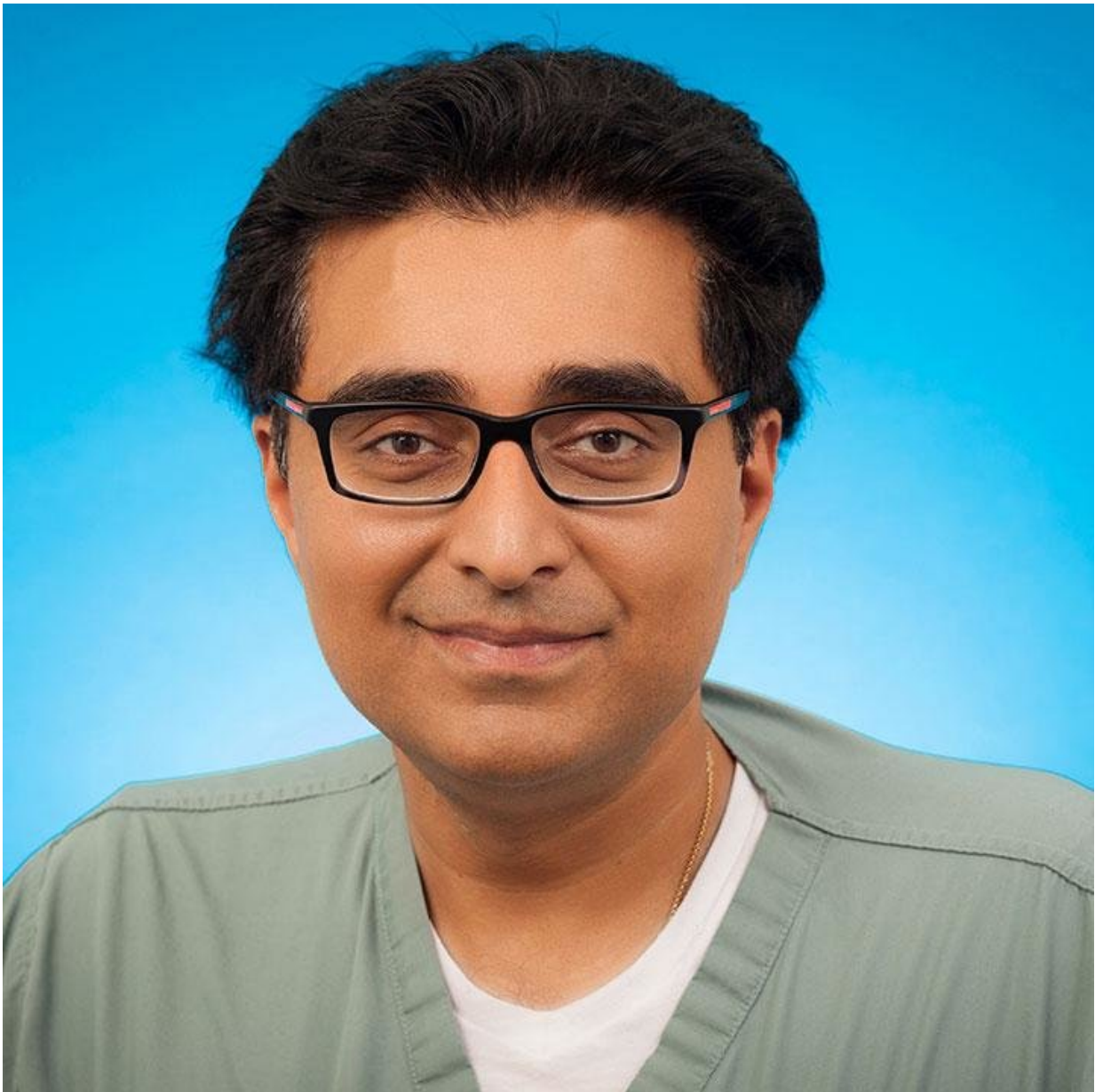


# **New medications for diabetes management have additional heart benefits, study finds**

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A drug used to manage diabetes may reduce heart disease and death in people with diabetes regardless of their cholesterol levels and whether they are on a statin therapy, suggests a new analysis of the LEADER trial led by Dr. Subodh Verma, director of the CardioLink platform at the Keenan Research Centre for Biomedical Science (KRCBS) of St. Michael's Hospital; Dr. Lawrence Leiter, director of the Lipid Clinic at St. Michael's; and Dr. David Mazer, associate scientist at the KRCBS. Credit: St. Michael's Hospital

A drug used to manage diabetes may reduce heart disease and death in people with diabetes regardless of their cholesterol levels and whether they are on a statin therapy, suggests a new analysis of the LEADER trial.

The analysis suggests people with Type 2 diabetes and high cardiovascular risk have a lowered risk of death from heart attack, nonfatal heart attack and nonfatal stroke when receiving liraglutide treatment, regardless of their [low-density lipoprotein cholesterol](#) (LDL-C) levels and whether they are concurrently taking statins. Liraglutide is a medication that works through various mechanisms to help reduce blood sugar.

Dr. Subodh Verma, cardiac surgeon-scientist and director of the CardioLink platform at the Keenan Research Centre for Biomedical Science (KRCBS) of St. Michael's Hospital in Canada, presented these findings at the European Society of Cardiology Annual Congress in Munich, Germany. They were published simultaneously in *Circulation*. Dr. Lawrence Leiter, director of the Lipid Clinic at St. Michael's, and Dr. David Mazer, associate scientist at the KRCBS co-led the study. St. Michael's was one of more than 400 international sites to participate in the LEADER trial, an FDA-mandated randomized control trial involving more than 9,300 patients with Type 2 diabetes to evaluate liraglutide and its effects on [heart disease](#).

"One of the many ways in which we reduce heart disease is by treating people with statins to lower their cholesterol," Dr. Verma said. "This work brings us closer to understanding whether there is further benefit of newer agents that treat diabetes and whether those benefits persist in people who are taking statins."

LDL-C levels are an important marker of developing heart disease. Higher levels of LDL-C are associated with increased risks of cardiovascular disease. Statins are lipid-lowering medications that lower the risk of heart disease.

Dr. Verma said these results are exciting as they show there are more options to lowering [heart disease risk](#) in people with diabetes than the use of statins alone.

"This analysis suggests that we have another tool in our armamentarium to further reduce risk for people who have Type 2 [diabetes](#)," he said.

This study was funded by Novo Nordisk, the pharmaceutical company that developed liraglutide.

**More information:** *Circulation* (2018). [DOI: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.118.036862](#)

Provided by St. Michael's Hospital

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