

Lipophilic statins associated with significantly reduced liver cancer incidence and mortality

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Lipophilic statins were associated with significantly reduced hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) incidence and mortality, but an association between hydrophilic statins and reduced risk for HCC was not found. Further research is needed to determine whether lipophilic statin therapy is feasible for prevention of HCC. Findings from a nationwide cohort study are published in *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Approximately 500,000 cases of HCC are diagnosed worldwide each year, related primarily to chronic infection with hepatitis B virus or hepatitis C virus. In the U.S. and Europe, incidence of HCC has tripled since the 1970s and mortality is increasing more rapidly for HCC than for any other cancer. As such, there is an urgent need to identify effective primary prevention strategies. Whether statin type influences [hepatocellular carcinoma](#) (HCC) incidence or mortality is unknown.

Researchers from the Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden and Harvard University, Boston, US, studied a nationwide Swedish registry of adults with viral hepatitis B or C to assess the relationship between lipophilic or hydrophilic statin use and HCC incidence and mortality. Compared with a matched cohort that did not use statins, lipophilic statin use was associated with substantially [lower risk](#) for incident HCC, all-cause death, and liver-related death. The apparent benefits of lipophilic statins were dose and duration-dependent, with the greatest reduction in HCC risk occurring after at least 600 cumulative defined daily doses (the equivalent of taking a moderate-dose statin for approximately 2 years). A similar association with reduced HCC risk was not found with hydrophilic statin use. According to the researchers, these findings confirm prior data linking statins with improved survival and reduced HCC risk in chronic liver disease.

More information: Tracey G. Simon et al. Lipophilic Statins and Risk for Hepatocellular Carcinoma and Death in Patients With Chronic Viral Hepatitis: Results From a Nationwide Swedish Population, *Annals of Internal Medicine* (2019). [DOI: 10.7326/M18-2753](https://doi.org/10.7326/M18-2753)

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