

SELF

McStatins? That's not even funny

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posted by [Monica Reinagel, MS, LD/N](#)



I really hope they meant it as a joke. But even if they did, it's not funny.

In a paper published this week in [The American Journal of Cardiology](#), the authors suggest that fast food joints should dispense free cholesterol-lowering medications along with the cheeseburgers and fries to offset the harmful effects of the food. Maybe this absurd proposal is simply a way to attract media attention. If so, it worked. But the authors stooped pretty low to make their point--which was fairly weak.

What was their point, anyway?

Statistically speaking, taking a cholesterol-lowering medication (a statin) every day reduces the risk of heart disease by a certain amount. Increased intake of fats and trans fats, on the other hand, increases your risk of heart disease. The author's point is that taking statins appears to reduce your risk slightly more than eating a cheeseburger's worth of fat increases it. Hardly an earth-shattering revelation.

Their conclusion is so ridiculous, I can't even paraphrase it. Here it is, in their own words:

"Routine accessibility of statins in establishments providing unhealthy food might be a rational modern means to offset the cardiovascular risk. Fast food outlets already offer free condiments to supplement meals. A free statin-containing accompaniment would offer cardiovascular benefits, opposite to the effects of equally available salt, sugar, and high-fat condiments."

Statin drugs haven't been shown to be safe or effective when taken intermittently. So, are the authors urging you to eat fast food every day? And if you have 3 cheeseburgers, are you supposed to take 3 doses? Are we going to be handing out child-sized doses in Happy Meals?

I don't care if the whole thing is tongue-in-cheek. No matter how many yuks it got at happy hour, this hare-brained idea should never have made it past the first draft much less been published in a peer-reviewed journal. Shame on the American Journal of Cardiology for wasting our time with such stupid and potentially harmful drivel.

Here are some resources that are more worth your time:

[Reduce your heart disease risk--now!](#)

[The Nutrition Data Heart Health Blog](#)

Get the headlines and highlights from the Nutrition Data blog delivered right to your email inbox. Our free newsletter goes out twice a month. [Sign up here.](#)

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