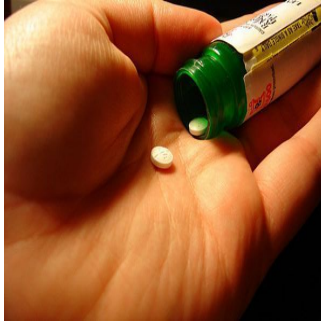


Generic Statins: Lower Cost = Higher Adherence



Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the US with statins being the most frequently prescribed drugs in the country primarily because of their effectiveness in reducing cardiovascular events. Evidence indicates that patients may not be deriving the full benefit of these statins because they do not take them as prescribed.

A recent study conducted by researchers at Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH), Harvard Medical School and CVS Health compared the use of generic versus brand-name statins to examine how a drug's name status can play a role in improving medication adherence and health outcomes.

The findings have been published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. The study found that patients who take generic statins are more likely to adhere to their medication as well as have a lower rate of cardiovascular events and death. More than 90,000 patients over the age of 65 were involved in the study, which was supported by a grant from drug manufacturer Teva Pharmaceutical.

According to Joshua J. Gagne, PharmD, ScD, Assistant Professor of Medicine in BWH's Division of Pharmacoepidemiology and Pharmacoeconomics as well as the lead author of this study, "Patients will only get the full clinical benefit of their medications if they take them, and our study found that patients are more likely to take generic statins than brand-name versions, which have a higher associated cost."

Electronic data from medical and pharmacy claims were used during the research. In addition, data from Medicare beneficiaries aged 65 years or older with prescription drug coverage were also included. The researchers measured adherence to statin therapy as well as investigated the outcomes comprising hospitalisation for acute coronary syndrome, stroke and mortality.

The research showed that patients on generic statins were more likely to adhere to their prescribed treatment as compared to those on brand-name statins. Patients on generic statins were also found to have an eight percent lower rate of cardiovascular events and death. This difference is mainly due to the fact that generic drugs are more affordable as compared to brand-name drugs. As far as patients in this study are concerned, it was found that the average co-payment for generic statins was only \$10, compared to \$48 for brand-name statins. The research thus shows that there is a direct relation between higher co-payments and lower adherence.

Overall, this study shows that in the setting of tiered co-payments in typical pharmacy benefit designs, generic statins are associated with lower out-of-pocket costs, improved rate of adherence to statin therapy and improved clinical outcomes, versus brand-name statins. It is important to note that the results may not be generalisable for all populations such as those with greater incomes and those with access to insurance plans that offer improved coverage for branded drugs.

Source: World Pharma News

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