**Statins could prevent the leading cause of hospital deaths worldwide by 25%, study finds**

* **Venous thrombosis is responsible for 25,000 hospital-based deaths worldwide**
* **But statins could reduce the risk of the condition by up to 25%, a study found**
* **The cheap daily pills may be used in future to prevent the condition, experts say**

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Statins could prevent a leading cause of hospital deaths worldwide, new research suggests.

The cheap daily pills reduce the risk of potentially fatal blood clots forming in the veins by up to 25 per cent, scientists claim.

Venous thrombosis (VTE), where clots form in the vein in the legs or lungs, is believed responsible for 25,000 hospital-based deaths across the globe.

But now experts say the finding could lead to the expansion of the use of the cholesterol-lowering tablets in preventing the condition.

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VTE is a mixture of both deep vein thrombosis - a clot in the leg - and pulmonary embolism - found in the lungs.

Being unwell and having reduced mobility - such as that of a short-time in hospital - can lead to changes in blood flow.

These make the deadly clots more likely, explaining the increased risk for patients undergoing operations.

A 2005 House of Commons report found that the deaths from VTE is more than the combined total from breast cancer, traffic accidents and AIDS.

In an attempt to find a possible prevention, researchers from Bristol University and Leicester Diabetes Centre looked into the use of statins.

Their review of 36 studies, published in The Lancet Heamatology, involved more than 3.2 million people.

They found the drugs were likely to cut the risk of the deadly condition by reducing inflammation - one of the factors involved in clot formation.

Study co-author Professor Kamlesh Khunti, from the Leicester Diabetes Centre, told MailOnline: 'These findings underscore a potential beneficial role of statin therapy on VTE in addition to its established role in cardiovascular disease prevention.’

Lead researcher Dr Setor Kunutsor, from the University of Bristol’s Musculoskeletal Research Unit, added: 'Currently, statins are only approved for lipid lowering in the primary and secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease.

'But they have shown great promise beyond their established lipid-lowering effects and these include potential beneficial impact on multiple disease conditions.

'These results provide an extensive body of evidence on the clinical benefit of statin in the occurrence of VTE and may support a true protective effect.'

Alongside their new proven benefits, the biggest review into the use of statins in September found they are hugely underestimated.

According to Oxford University researchers, they prevent at least 80,000 heart attacks and strokes in the UK every year.

But tens of thousands more could be avoided if a greater number of patients were persuaded to take them, they said.

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