**Statins could halt vein blood clots, research suggests**

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University of Leicester involved in study into cholesterol-lowering pill

Statins could hold the key to eradicating one of the most preventable causes of hospital deaths after researchers uncovered a new role for the cholesterol-lowering pill.

The medication, commonly used to prevent heart attacks, reduces the threat of a condition affecting millions globally called venous thromboembolism (VTE), where blood clots form in the vein in the lungs or in limbs, by between 15 and 25 per cent.

The conclusion was made following a thorough analysis of 36 studies involving more than 3.2 million people as part of new research published in The Lancet Haematology. It was supported by NIHR Collaboration for Leadership for Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC) East Midlands and the NIHR Leicester-Loughborough Diet, Lifestyle and Physical Activity Biomedical Research Unit.

The results of the summary compiled by researchers from Leicester Diabetes Centre and the University of Bristol provide an “extensive body of evidence on the clinical benefit of statin in the occurrence of VTE”.

The finding could potentially lead to new guidelines and an expansion of the use of treatment, which is already established in cardiovascular disease prevention.

Co-investigator Professor Kamlesh Khunti, Professor of Primary Care Diabetes & Vascular Medicine at the University of Leicester, Director NIHR CLAHRC East Midlands and Co-Director of the Leicester Diabetes Centre, said: “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.”

NIHR CLAHRC East Midlands is a collaboration of NHS, universities, patients and industry turning research into cost-saving and high-quality care through cutting-edge innovation.

The Leicester Diabetes Centre, based at Leicester General Hospital, is an international centre of excellence in diabetes research and education. It is a partnership between the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust and the University of Leicester led by Professor Khunti and Professor Melanie Davies CBE.

The paper, ‘Statins and primary prevention of venous thromboembolism: a systematic review and meta-analysis’, published in *The Lancet*, is available here: [**http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhae/article/PIIS2352-3026(16)30184-3/fulltext**](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhae/article/PIIS2352-3026(16)30184-3/fulltext)

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors**

* For further details, to arrange an interview or more photographs, email [**oliver.jelley@ojpr.co.uk**](mailto:oliver.jelley@ojpr.co.uk) o
* The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is funded by the Department of Health to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research. The NIHR is the research arm of the NHS. Since its establishment in April 2006, the NIHR has transformed research in the NHS. It has increased the volume of applied health research for the benefit of patients and the public, driven faster translation of basic science discoveries into tangible benefits for patients and the economy, and developed and supported the people who conduct and contribute to applied health research. The NIHR plays a key role in the Government’s strategy for economic growth, attracting investment by the life-sciences industries through its world-class infrastructure for health research. Together, the NIHR people, programmes, centres of excellence and systems represent the most integrated health research system in the world. For further information, visit [**http://www.nihr.ac.uk**](http://www.nihr.ac.uk/).
* The Diabetes Research Centre is based at the Leicester Diabetes Centre.
* The Leicester Diabetes Centre is an international centre of excellence in diabetes research, education and innovation and is led by Professor Melanie Davies CBE and Professor Kamlesh Khunti.
* Hosted at Leicester General Hospital, the Leicester Diabetes Centre is a partnership between the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust and the University of Leicester, working with the city and county Clinical Commissioning Groups. It is a leading applied health research unit committed to improving the lives and care of people with diabetes and other long-term conditions.
* For more information about the Leicester Diabetes Centre, visit [**http://www.leicesterdiabetescentre.org.uk**](http://www.leicesterdiabetescentre.org.uk/).

**The University of Bristol** is one of the most popular and successful universities in the UK. It was ranked within the top 50 universities in the world in the QS World University Rankings 2016. The University of Bristol is ranked among the top five institutions in the UK for its research, according to new analysis of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014, and is the 3rd most targeted university by top UK employers.  Bristol is a member of the Russell Group of UK research-intensive universities, and a member of the Worldwide Universities Network, a grouping of research-led institutions of international standing.