

The Reply



With regard to the letter to the editor referencing the original article “Implementing New Guidelines in the Management of Blood Cholesterol,”¹ we agree with many of the salient points raised by Weinrach and Barkoudah. However, the purpose of our article was not to highlight all ways to lower cardiovascular risk, but to address confusion and apprehension surrounding the release of the new blood cholesterol guidelines.

Just as focusing solely on smoking cessation and ignoring poorly controlled diabetes, elevated blood pressure, obesity, elevated lipids, and sedentary lifestyle would not adequately address cardiovascular risk, neither would a focus solely on statin therapy to reduce all-cause mortality and morbidity as highlighted. However, neither we nor the blood cholesterol advisory panel suggest focusing solely on

statin therapy. The blood cholesterol guidelines clearly emphasize healthy lifestyle in conjunction with risk factor modification. Further, the release of the blood cholesterol guidelines purposely coincided with the guidelines on healthy lifestyle. Our role as clinicians is not parochial. It is educative. Patients need to understand the importance of their decisions with regard to lifestyle as well as medication adherence. This is done through open, honest, and ongoing dialogue, which is the essence of shared decision-making. To suggest that patients and caregivers are incapable of this undervalues the doctor-patient relationship.

Thomas F. Boyden, MD, MS
Spectrum Health Medical Group
Cardiovascular Services
Grand Rapids, Mich

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.amjmed.2015.05.021>

Funding: None.

Conflict of Interest: None.

Authorship: The author had access to the data and is solely responsible for writing the manuscript.

Reference

1. Boyden TF, Brook RD, Jackson E, Rubenfire M, Eagle K. Implementing new guidelines in the management of blood cholesterol. *Am J Med.* 2014;127(8):705-706.