

Statins and Muscle Adverse Effects

A Complementary Perspective

We appreciate the article by Chatzizisis et al.,^[1] which focused on risk factors and drug interactions as they relate to HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor ('statin') muscle adverse effects. We would like to direct readers to our review article on statin adverse effects:^[2] tables I, II and IV, and III of our paper (respectively) parallel table I, figure I and table III of the Chatzizisis et al. paper. These address reported types of muscle adverse effects, adverse effect risk factors and drug interactions, in many cases complementing and/or supplementing findings provided by Chatzizisis et al., and also placing the findings in a theoretical framework.

It may also bear note that 'Chinese red rice fungus' (more commonly called red yeast rice, sometimes termed red mould rice), listed in their drug interaction table (not as a hypolipidaemic agent), might reasonably be viewed as a statin agent itself. Red yeast rice, which lowers cholesterol,^[3] indeed contains statin agents, including lovastatin.^[4-6]

We applaud Chatzizisis and colleagues for bringing further attention to this important topic.

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The Authors' Reply

We read with interest the letter by Golomb et al.,^[1] regarding our recent review article on statin-related myopathy.^[2] Our purpose was to provide an up-to-date, comprehensive review of potential factors that may increase the myopathic risk of patients treated with HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors ('statins'). Because of the widespread use of statins, this has long been, and still remains, a widely discussed topic. Given the vast number of publications on the safety profile and potential side effects of statins, the presentation of the tables and figures that summarize the major points of our article may be viewed as complementary to previously published work,^[3,4] including, but certainly not limited to, the excellent article by Golomb and Evans.^[5] We feel that an additional contribution of our paper is putting the theoretical points into a clinical perspective, as we summarize recent guidelines and current evidence regarding the diagnostic evaluation and management of statin-induced myopathy in our figure 2.

Regarding Chinese red rice fungus, it is indeed well known to contain statin agents. However, for the sake of consistency and clarity of presentation, we felt that it would not be reasonable to include an over-the-counter lipid-lowering agent in the same category as prescribed hypolipidaemic drugs.

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