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REVIEW ARTICLE
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# THE UPDATE MEDICATION ON HIGH CHOLESTEROL

**Eman Hafiz Ibrahim[1]*, Samyah Meshal Alshammari[2], Manal Halal Alanazi[3], Haya Mohmmed Alqousi[4], Noura Howidi Aldosari[5] and Awatef Fahat Alanezi[6]**

[1]*Nursing, Sugar-emey@hotmail.com, Al - Morouj PHC
[2] Nursing, asooma55@yahoo.com, Ministry of health /Academic affairs and training
[3] Nursing technician, mano81177@gmail.com, Sulaymaniyah Health Center
[4] Nurse Technician, hayagousi28@gmail.com, PHC ALMUROOJ
[5] Nursing, nou20234@gmail.com, ALuraija Al wusta PHC
[6] Nursing, Awaatf_90@hotmail.com, Almuroj PHC

***Corresponding Author:** Eman Hafiz Ibrahim
Email: Sugar-emey@hotmail.com

**Abstract**:
This essay aims to provide an update on the medication for high cholesterol, a common medical condition affecting individuals worldwide. High cholesterol levels pose a significant risk for cardiovascular diseases, including heart attacks and strokes. The essay will explore the current advancements in medication for high cholesterol, focusing on statins, PCSK9 inhibitors, and other emerging therapies. The results from recent studies, clinical trials, and meta-analyses will be discussed to highlight the effectiveness and safety profiles of these medications. Furthermore, the essay will analyze the benefits and potential side effects of each medication, providing a comprehensive understanding of the treatment options available. The conclusion will summarize the findings and emphasize the importance of medication adherence and lifestyle modifications in the management of high cholesterol.

**Keywords:** high cholesterol, medication, statins, PCSK9 inhibitors, cardiovascular diseases, treatment options, side effects, lifestyle modifications.

## Introduction:

High cholesterol, also known as hypercholesterolemia, is a prevalent medical condition characterized by elevated levels of cholesterol in the blood. It is a significant risk factor for the development of cardiovascular diseases, including heart attacks, strokes, and atherosclerosis. The management of high cholesterol involves a combination of lifestyle modifications and medication therapy. While lifestyle modifications, such as a healthy diet and regular exercise, remain crucial, medication plays a vital role in achieving optimal cholesterol levels. This essay aims to provide an update on the medication options available for high cholesterol, focusing on statins, PCSK9 inhibitors, and emerging therapies. As of my knowledge cutoff in September 2021, there are several medications commonly used to treat high cholesterol levels. It's important to note that treatment decisions should be made in consultation with a healthcare professional, as they can provide personalized recommendations based on an individual's specific medical history and needs. Here are some commonly prescribed medications for high cholesterol:

Statins: Statins are the most commonly prescribed medications for high cholesterol. They work by inhibiting an enzyme involved in cholesterol production in the liver. Examples of statins include atorvastatin, simvastatin, and rosuvastatin.
Ezetimibe: Ezetimibe is a medication that works by reducing the absorption of cholesterol from the digestive tract. It is often prescribed in combination with statins to further lower LDL cholesterol levels.

PCSK9 Inhibitors: Proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9 (PCSK9) inhibitors are a newer class of medications that can lower LDL cholesterol levels. They work by blocking the PCSK9 protein, which helps remove LDL receptors from the liver, resulting in increased receptor availability and greater LDL cholesterol clearance. Examples of PCSK9 inhibitors include evolocumab and alirocumab.
Bile Acid Sequestrants: Bile acid sequestrants, such as cholestyramine and colesevelam, bind to bile acids in the intestines, preventing their reabsorption. This leads to increased conversion of cholesterol into bile acids, reducing LDL cholesterol levels.
Fibrates: Fibrates, such as fenofibrate and gemfibrozil, primarily target triglyceride levels but can also have a moderate effect on increasing HDL ("good") cholesterol levels.
Niacin (Nicotinic Acid): Niacin is a B vitamin that can help raise HDL cholesterol levels and lower LDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels. However, its use may be limited due to potential side effects, such as flushing and liver abnormalities.
It's important to note that lifestyle modifications, including a heart-healthy diet, regular exercise, weight management, and smoking cessation, are key components of managing high cholesterol. These lifestyle changes, along with medication, if necessary, can help reduce cholesterol levels and lower the risk of cardiovascular disease.
Since my knowledge is not up to date, it's crucial to consult with a healthcare professional for the most current and appropriate medication options for high cholesterol. They can provide personalized recommendations based on the latest research and individual health factors.

**Results:**

1 .Statins: The most commonly prescribed medications for high cholesterol are statins. These drugs work by inhibiting an enzyme involved in cholesterol synthesis, thus lowering cholesterol levels. Several randomized controlled trials (RCTs) have demonstrated the efficacy of statins in reducing LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol, overall mortality, and cardiovascular events (Wang et al., 2020). Additionally, recent meta-analyses have shown that statins reduce the risk of all-cause mortality, coronary artery disease, and stroke significantly (Chou et al., 2021).

2 .PCSK9 Inhibitors: Another class of medications used for high cholesterol management includes PCSK9 inhibitors. These drugs work by inhib the PCSK9 enzyme, which aids in the degradation of LDL receptors. By blocking PCSK9, these inhibitors increase the number of LDL receptors available to remove LDL cholesterol from the blood. Clinical trials have demonstrated that PCSK9 inhibitors effectively reduce LDL cholesterol levels, with some studies showing greater LDL reduction compared to statins alone (Giugliano et al., 2017). However, their cost and route of administration remain potential barriers to broader implementation.

3 .Emerging Therapies: Beyond statins and PCSK9 inhibitors, ongoing research explores novel therapies for high cholesterol management. One promising approach involves the use of RNA interference (RNAi) technology to target specific genes involved in cholesterol metabolism. Clinical trials using RNAi-based therapies have shown significant reductions in LDL cholesterol levels, including in individuals with genetic causes of high cholesterol (Raal et al., 2020). Despite being in early stages of development, these emerging therapies hold potential for future treatment options.

**Discussion:**

The effectiveness of medication therapy in managing high cholesterol is undeniable. Statins have been widely studied and proven to reduce cholesterol levels, ultimately decreasing cardiovascular events and mortality rates. However, the occurrence of side effects, such as muscle pains and liver abnormalities, cannot be ignored (Stroes et al., 2020). Monitoring liver function and muscular symptoms during statin therapy is recommended to ensure safety.

PCSK9 inhibitors offer an alternative for individuals who do not tolerate statins or require further LDL cholesterol reduction. These medications have demonstrated excellent efficacy in lowering LDL cholesterol levels, particularly when combined with statins. However, access to PCSK9 inhibitors can be limited due to cost and barriers to administration, including the need for subcutaneous injections (Navarese et al., 2020). Further research is needed to assess their long-term safety and cost-effectiveness.

Emerging therapies, such as RNAi-based treatments, provide hope for the future. These therapies target specific genes involved in cholesterol metabolism, offering a personalized approach to high cholesterol management. However, challenges related to delivery systems, potential off-target effects, and long-term safety profiles should be addressed before widespread clinical application.

**Conclusion:**

In conclusion, the management of high cholesterol requires a comprehensive approach that includes both lifestyle modifications and medication therapy. Statins remain the gold standard treatment for lowering cholesterol levels and reducing cardiovascular risks. PCSK9 inhibitors offer additional options for individuals who cannot tolerate or achieve optimal results with statins alone. Emerging therapies, such as RNAi-based treatments, show promising results and may revolutionize high cholesterol management in the future. However, further research and cost-effectiveness evaluations are essential.

Medication adherence and lifestyle modifications should be emphasized in clinical practice to maximize the benefits of the prescribed therapies. It is crucial to consider individual patient factors, including coexisting medical conditions, drug interactions, and potential side effects. The collaboration between healthcare professionals and patients is vital for successful cholesterol management, reducing the burden of cardiovascular diseases, and improving overall patient outcomes.

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