

[P-284R] Treatment of hypercholesterolemia among older diabetic patients in a Veterans Affairs medical center

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We evaluated cholesterol management in 1394 diabetics to see if lipids were measured and if elevated lipids were managed appropriately. We compared hypercholesterolemia management in older diabetics with younger diabetics and in older diabetics with practice guidelines. Hypotheses were: (1) the young, young-old, and old-old diabetic receive different care in hypercholesterolemia management; and (2) the old-old diabetic receives assessment and management of lipids that are less aggressive than standard cholesterol management guidelines. Data extracted from the Louisville VA Decentralized Hospital Computer Program identified patients by diagnosis, lab measures and medications dispensed. We studied diabetic patients ages 55-64, 65-74, and 75 and greater over a 2 yr period from 10/1/97 until 9/30/99. Quality of care standards were the Adult Treatment Panel II guidelines of the National Cholesterol Education Program and the Department of Veterans Affairs guidelines for The Pharmacologic Management of Hyperlipidemia. We compared the management of hypercholesterolemia by age group. We examined diabetic patients with a LDL >159 mg/dL to see if they were prescribed a cholesterol lowering medication. We found that patients aged 75 and over have the lowest percentage of patients on cholesterol lowering medications. We found the medications used to treat hypercholesterolemia did not vary by age group. We performed statistical analysis using SPSS system. We adjusted for comorbidity. It appears hypercholesterolemia is not adequately managed in the oldest diabetic population. Identifying discrepancies in the care of diabetics of differing ages or between physician practice and established guidelines will provide useful data for physician practice and patient management.10