Statins are back in the news and as usual not without controversy. Last week, the ACC/AHA released new guidelines for lowering cholesterol. These are the first changes to treatment since 2004. Even though these new guidelines were years in preparation with the participation of hundreds of “lipid” experts, that did not stop the medical pundits from attacking and with good reasons. (Besides the fact that I HATE GUIDELINES.)

The new guidelines move away from the emphasis on achieving targeted LDL lowering, to the use of statins as a general reducer of risk. It was correctly pointed out by the writing committee that the large clinical trials that proved the worth of statins were done in single dose trials. Statins have been shown to reduce risk in large trials regardless of the LDL level achieved. But they were large, very large, clinical trials, and it would have not been possible to individualize treatment. It was proof of concept not proof of maximal therapy.

The guideline committee also had to decide who should receive statins. Some criteria, such as patients with known CAD are obvious, but what about the vast majority of people without known or symptomatic disease. Do we treat, everyone? The Committee said “no,” not everyone, just those with a high risk (or anyone who eats at McDonalds) based on results from a new risk calculator. Estimates of 10-year risk for CAD are based on data from multiple community-based populations and are applicable to African-American and non-Hispanic white men and women 40 through 79 years of age. Those individuals with risk greater than 5-7.5% should be treated. Within minutes, outside experts pointed out that the recommended risk calculator is based on old data and over-estimates risk between 75-150%. This would easily recommend statins to millions more than intended. They claim, therefore, that the guidelines are bogus.

Well, I don’t have a problem with the risk calculator. I would rather over-treat than under-treat and I do think that this is a great recommendation for population treatment and for pharmaceutical companies. Most of us treat individuals and not populations and better data exists about treating individuals. Smaller studies have shown beneficial changes with very low LDL levels. For example, results from the TNT (Treat to New Targets study) concluded “therapy to achieve LDL cholesterol concentrations well below recommended target levels provides an incremental clinical benefit in patients with stable coronary artery disease.” Multiple well done trials have shown that lower is better and more likely to lead to regression or at least stabilization of plaque.

It is much harder treating to a number, therefore, wouldn’t more patients stay on treatment if we just use a fixed dose (like antibiotics)? It is certainly much easier for the physician and the patient. But it’s not better. Similar logic would be that any lowering of BP is good for the patient and since single dose therapy is easier, why don’t we treat BP in a similar fashion? Small reductions will decrease morbidity and would be a great treatment for large populations. However, data overwhelming suggests that the better the BP control, the lower the morbidity. So unless we are ready to start treating BP with single dose drug regimens why are we subjecting patients with lipid abnormalities to second class treatment status? If it’s all too complicated, eat a handful of nuts, and sit back and enjoy the experts going at each other. But if you are worried, remember, when it comes to LDL and limbo the mantra should be “how low can you go?”

Alan G. Wasserman, M.D.
Department of Medicine
December 2013 Grand Rounds

Dec 5  “Global Women’s Initiative”
Mary Ellsberg, MD
Director, Global Women’s Institute
The George Washington University

Dec 12  “Infertility”
David Frankfurter, MD
Professor of Obstetrics & Gynecology
Medical Director, The Fertility & IVF Center
Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology
GW Medical Faculty Associates

Dec 19  “Peyronie’s Disease”
Paul Rusilko, DO
Assistant Professor of Urology
Department of Urology
GW Medical Faculty Associates

Dec 26 Cancelled for Winter Holiday

Medicine Team Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHITE TEAM</th>
<th>(202) 715-5669</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YELLOW TEAM</td>
<td>(202) 715-6041</td>
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<tr>
<td>GREEN TEAM</td>
<td>(202) 715-6062</td>
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<tr>
<td>RED TEAM</td>
<td>(202) 715-6039</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLUE TEAM</td>
<td>(202) 715-6156</td>
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<tr>
<td>SILVER TEAM</td>
<td>(202) 715-6040</td>
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<tr>
<td>PURPLE TEAM</td>
<td>(202) 715-6042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOLD TEAM</td>
<td>(202) 715-6044</td>
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ADMITTING RESIDENT 741-0161 pager

Cardiology Grand Rounds
5:00 PM, GWU Hospital, Conference Room 6-116

Dec 4  Mortality & Morbidity Conference
Dec 11 Christian Nagy, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of Cardiology
Department of Medicine
GW Medical Faculty Associates
Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement

Dec 18 Steven Farmer, MD, PhD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Division of Cardiology
Department of Medicine
GW Medical Faculty Associates
Topic TBD

Dec 25 No Conference– Winter Holiday

Resident Lecture Series
December 2013 Noon Conference

Dec 2 Recruitment/Resident Luncheon
Dec 3 Journal Club
Dec 4 Recruitment/Resident Luncheon
Dec 5 Medicine Grand Rounds
Dec 6 Recruitment/Resident Luncheon
Dec 9 Recruitment/Resident Luncheon
Dec 10 “Oral Antidiabetics”– Dr. Sabyasachi Sen
Dec 11 Recruitment/Resident Luncheon
Dec 12 Medicine Grand Rounds
Dec 13 Recruitment/Resident Luncheon
Dec 16 Recruitment/Resident Luncheon
Dec 17 Clinicopathologic Conference–
Drs. Steven Quinn and Yevgenly Vayntrub
Dec 18 Recruitment/Resident Luncheon
Dec 19 Medicine Grand Rounds
Dec 20 Recruitment/Resident Luncheon
Dec 23 Holiday Week– No Conference
Dec 24 Holiday Week– No Conference
Dec 25 Holiday Week– No Conference
Dec 26 Holiday Week– No Conference
Dec 27 Holiday Week– No Conference
Dec 30 Recruitment/Resident Luncheon
Dec 31 No Conference

The George Washington University Medical Center (GWUMC) is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to sponsor continuing medical education for physicians. GWUMC designates this continuing medical education activity on an hour-for-hour basis in Category I of the Physician’s Recognition Award of the American Medical Association.
Please Join Us in Welcoming Our Newest Addition to the Medicine Faculty

Dr. Steven A. Farmer, has joined the Department of Medicine in the Division of Cardiology. Dr. Farmer comes to us from Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine and the Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management in Chicago, IL, where he has been on faculty since 2009. Since 2011, he has also served as the Director of Quality and Policy at Northwestern Center for Cardiovascular Innovation.

Prior to receiving his medical degree from Yale University School of Medicine, Dr. Farmer earned his PhD in Health Services Research from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine in London, UK. He completed his residency, general cardiology and noninvasive cardiology fellowships at The Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

He is the Principal Investigator of an R01 award studying the Joint Effect of Malpractice Risk and Financial Incentives on Cardiac Testing for the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

Dr. Farmer is working to help develop the new Office of Clinical Practice Innovation and will be sharing his time with the OCPI. He has had other funded research from the American College of Cardiology and NHLBI. Dr. Farmer is a referee for numerous prestigious cardiology journals and serves on scientific committees for both the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology. He has published numerous articles and abstracts, 11 of which he is first author. He is board certified in Internal Medicine, Cardiology, Echocardiography and Nuclear Cardiology.

Please join us in welcoming Dr. Farmer to the Department of Medicine and to the MFA. Appointments can be made for him by calling 202-741-3333.

DC ACP Chapter 2013 Award Winners

Congratulations to Dr. Henry Masur for being awarded the John F. Maher Memorial Laureate 2013 Award which honors those who have shown by their lives and conduct an abiding commitment to excellence in medical care and service to the College. Former Laureate awardees include Dr. Alan Wasserman (2008) and Dr. Gary Simon (2000). Congratulations also to Dr. Charles Faselis for being awarded the Sol Katz, MD Memorial Teaching 2013 Award which honors Excellence in Teaching at the American College of Physicians Annual Scientific Meeting of the District of Columbia Chapter in November.

A GW Frontiers in Medicine Lecture
“Healthy Aging: Part I”

The next Frontiers in Medicine panel discussion is scheduled for Thursday, December 12, at GW’s Jack Morton Auditorium, located at 805 21st St., NW, beginning with a reception at 6:00 pm and lecture at 7:00 pm. A panel of GW medical experts will explore new ways to deal with the effects of aging. Part I of the series will feature GW experts on the eyes, ears and the most visible of organs, the skin.

The panelists include:
- Alison Ehrlich, MD, MHJ, FAAD
  Professor & Chair of Dermatology, Director of Clinical Research
- David Belyea, MD, MBA, FACS
  Associate Professor & Vice Chair of Ophthalmology
- Ashkan Monfared, MD
  Assistant Professor of Surgery & of Neurosurgery
  Director of Otology & Neurotology
  Director, Center for Otolaryngology Microsurgical Education and Training (COMET) Lab

Alan Wasserman, MD, Professor and Chairman, Department of Medicine, will moderate the discussion.

The lecture is open to the public, please RSVP to: go.gwu.edu/healthyaging by December 9, for questions contact Natalie Allgeier at (202) 994-8738 or allgeier@gwu.edu.

Frontiers in Sustainability: Dr. Gigi El-Bayoumi Panelist

The GWU Sustainability Initiative introduced a new year-long seminar series, Frontiers in Sustainability with its first panel discussion held in November on “Urban Resources: Who Has Access to Basic Needs?” The panel included experts in clean air policy, community organizing, law and public health. Among the panelists was Dr. Gigi El-Bayoumi, Associate Professor of Medicine and Founding Director of the Rodham Institute, which will develop training models to teach academic health care institutions to address urban health disparities. Dr. El-Bayoumi spoke of the importance of getting public health practitioners to remain dedicated to low-income neighborhoods and to address disparities and promote health equity in DC.

National Press Club to Host Cheney/Reiner Discussion of New Book

Vice President Dick Cheney and Dr. Jonathan Reiner will discuss their new book “Heart: An American Medical Odyssey” on Tuesday, December 3, 2013 at the National Press Club.

This discussion is hosted by the National Press Club’s Book Committee and will be moderated by Barbara S. Cochran, President of the Journalism Institute at the National Press Club.

The discussion will be followed by a private dinner with donors of the GW Heart & Vascular Institute.
**Rheumatology Academic Conference Schedule December 2013**

ACC Building 6B-411B (8:00 am - 9:00 am)  
Questions? Call (202) 741-2488

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<tr>
<td>Dec 5</td>
<td><strong>Radiology Conference</strong></td>
<td>ACC Building 6B-411B</td>
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<td>Dr. Kathleen Brindle, Associate Professor of Radiology</td>
<td>(8:00 am - 9:00 am)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 5</td>
<td>Didactic Sessions</td>
<td>GW Hospital, 6th floor</td>
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<td>Dec 12</td>
<td><strong>Billing and Coding</strong></td>
<td>GW Hospital, 6th floor</td>
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<td>Dec 19</td>
<td><strong>Intra-City Rheumatology Grand Rounds</strong></td>
<td>Washington Hospital Center</td>
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<td>NOTE LOCATION: Washington Hospital Center</td>
<td>NOTE TIME: 7:30 AM</td>
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**Kudos & Congratulations**

*Congratulations* ... to Dr. Tulsi Mehta, Renal Diseases, on being nominated by the Internal Medicine faculty at PG Hospital for a faculty position at Ross University School of Medicine. This nomination was based on her teaching evaluations and contributions to their medical students. Way to go!

*Kudos* ... to Dr. Christina Puchalski, Geriatrics and Palliative Care, who was recently elected to the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine Board of Directors.

*More Kudos* ... to Dr. Michael Irwig, Endocrinology, who presented to the November meeting of the DC Chapter of the American College of Physicians (ACP) on the topic of "Sexual health and dysfunction".

*Even More Kudos* ... a patient writes to thank Dr. Brad Moore, General Internal Medicine, "His listening skills are extraordinary, making his responses pitch perfect every time. He is calming, proactive, solution oriented (both in person and patient online), resourceful, respectful and patient. My husband and I - sad but true - look forward to our appointments with Dr. Moore as much as we look forward to a fun night out."

Our condolences to the family of Dr. Wesley Fiser, PGY3, on the passing of his father, Dr. Paul Martin Fiser, who passed away in November. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family at this time.

*See you next month!*  
*The Editor*