Simvastatin May Cut Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, Risk

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Contributing Writer

ATLANTA — Simvastatin use for at least 7 months reduced the incidence of Alzheimer’s disease by 30% and Parkinson’s disease by 24% in older people, according to an analysis of a Department of Veterans Affairs pharmaceutical database.

Neither lovastatin nor atorvastatin provided similar benefits.

The protective effects of simvastatin were more prominent in people without hypertension. In this subgroup, Alzheimer’s incidence was reduced by 76% and the incidence of Parkinson’s disease was reduced by 88%.

The study’s lead author Dr. Benjamin Wolozin reported at the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience.

Dr. Wolozin, professor of pharmacology from a large VA pharmaceutical database that included 4.5 million patients and more than 110 million annual medication prescriptions. Individuals were excluded if they were less than 65 years of age or had a pre-existing diagnosis of senile dementia of the Alzheimer’s type.

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Two different mechanisms might explain the unique effects of simvastatin, compared with those of the other two statins analyzed, Dr. Wolozin said. For atorvastatin, the known barrier may explain its ineffectiveness.

Lovastatin and simvastatin both reduce inflammation, explained Dr. Wolozin. Only atorvastatin, cholesterol strongly enough to reduce inflammation sufficiently to protect against Alzheimer’s or Parkinson’s disease.