

# HEALTHY HEART

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Honorary Editor: Dr. Anish Chandarana Interventional Cardiologist



#### From the Desk of Hon. Editor:

**Hello Friends** 

Greeting

Aspirin has existed for many more years than each of the doctor using it.

Still there is a lot of confusion regarding its use for primary prevention of cardiovascular disease. This review will help to provide us clarity as the said subject. *Best wishes* 

#### **ASPIRIN For Primary Prevention: YES, or NO?**

The role of aspirin for secondary prevention of myocardial infarction (MI), stroke, or transient ischemic attack (TIA) is well established. However, the efficacy and safety of aspirin for primary prevention of cardiovascular disease (CVD) varied among multiple randomized controlled trials (RCTs), creating significant variability in guidelines. Long-term aspirin use has also been historically associated with a reduction in colorectal cancer (CRC) incidence and mortality. The recently published 10-year follow-up of the JPAD 2 study (Japanese Primary Prevention of Atherosclerosis with Aspirin for Diabetes), as well as 3 large RCTs, ARRIVE (Aspirin to Reduce Risk of Initial Vascular Events), ASCEND (A Study of Cardiovascular Events in Diabetes), and ASPREE (Aspirin in Reducing Events in the Elderly), added more data to the existing debate.

Two systematic reviews published recently in JAMA (Association of Aspirin

Use for Primary Prevention With Cardiovascular Events and Bleeding Events A Systematic Review and Metaanalysis - 13 RCTs, 164 225 participants; Sean L. Zheng, BM, BCh, MA, MRCP; Alistair J. Roddick, BSc: January 22, 2019 Volume 321, Number 3) and in JACC (Aspirin for Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Events – 15 RCTs, 165,502 participants; Hesham K. Abdelaziz, MD, PHD,a,b,\* Marwan Saad, MD, PHD,b,c,\* Naga Venkata K. Pothineni, MD.c Michael Megaly, MD, MS,d,e Rahul Potluri, MD,f Mohammed Saleh, MD,g David Lai Chin Kon, MD,a David H. Roberts, MD,a Deepak L. Bhatt, MD, MPH,h Herbert D. Aronow, MD, MPH, i J. Dawn Abbott, MD, i Jawahar L. Mehta, MD, PHD: JACC VOL. 73, NO. 23, 2019 JUNE 18, 2019:2915 – 2 9) represent the most comprehensive analysis of the available data to evaluate the efficacy and safety of aspirin for primary prevention of CVD as well as its effect on cancer incidence and mortality within the period of follow-up.

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HEALTHY HEART



First 5 tables are taken from the abovementioned JAMA article and the last figure is taken from JACC article.

#### **Key Highlights:**

1. This body of evidence shows that aspirin use for primary prevention of CVD is associated with a decreased risk for myocardial infarction and stroke, but not cardiovascular mortality or all-cause mortality. Results are quite similar when studies using all doses of aspirin are compared with studies using low-dose aspirin ( $\leq 100 \text{ mg/day}$ ).

2. When looking at studies reporting on the harms of low-dose aspirin use ( $\leq 100$  mg/day), which is most relevant to current practice, a pooled analysis of 10 trials showed that aspirin use was associated with a 58% increase in major gastrointestinal bleeding and a pooled analysis of 11 trials showed a 31% increase in intracranial bleeds in the aspirin group compared with the control (placebo or no aspirin) group. (*Figure 1*) Low-dose aspirin use was not associated with a statistically significant increase in risk for fatal haemorrhagic stroke.

3. Data suggested that the increased risk for bleeding associated with aspirin use occurs relatively quickly after initiating aspirin, and data do not suggest that aspirin has a differential relative bleeding risk based on age, sex, presence of diabetes, level of CVD risk, or race or ethnicity. Although the increase in relative risk does not appear to differ based on age, the absolute risk for bleeding and thus, the magnitude of bleeding harm does increase with age, and more so in adults with age 60 years and older.

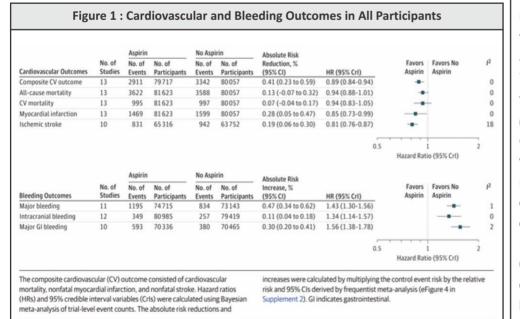
4. Aspirin use has a small net benefit in persons ages 40 to 59 years with 10% or greater 10-year CVD risk, and initiation of aspirin use has no net benefit in persons aged 60 years or older. Modelling data demonstrated that aspirin use in both men and women ageing 40 to 59 years

with 10% or greater 10-year CVD risk generally provides a modest net benefit in both quality-adjusted life-years and life-years gained. Initiation of aspirin use in persons ages 60 to 69 years results in quality-adjusted life-years gained that range from slightly negative to slightly positive, depending on CVD risk level, and life-years gained are generally negative.

5. In persons aged 70 to 79 years, initiation of aspirin use results in a loss of both quality-adjusted life-years and life-years at essentially all CVD risk levels modeled (ie, up to 20% 10-year CVD risk). - (*Figure 2 (A & B)*)

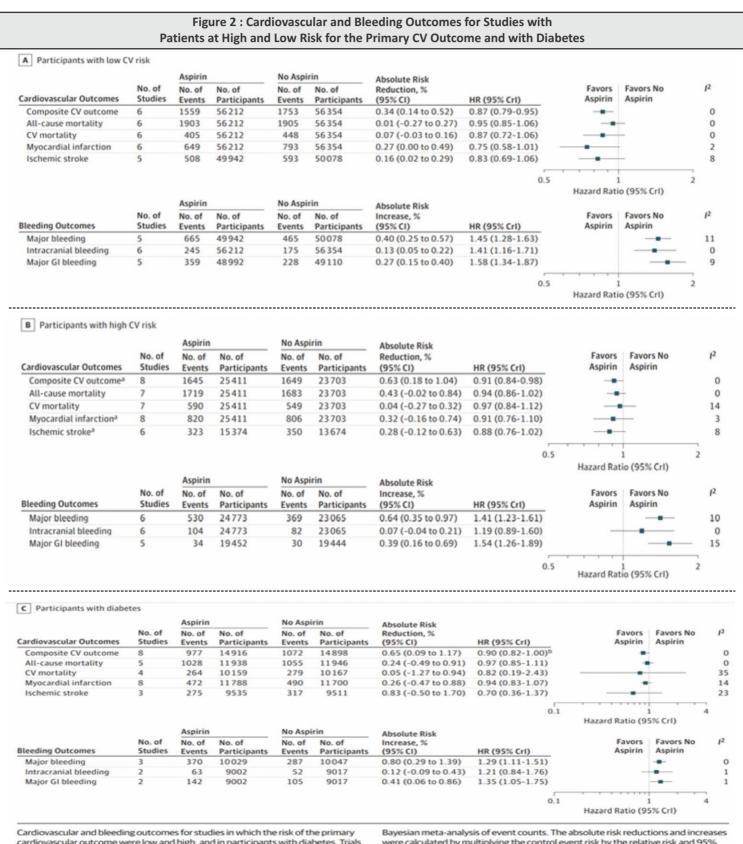
6. When looking at net lifetime benefit of continuous aspirin use until stopping at age 65, 70, 75, 80, or 85 years, modelling data suggest that there is generally little incremental lifetime net benefit in continuing aspirin use beyond the ages of 75 to 80 years.

7. The net benefit of continuing aspirin use by a person in their 60s or 70s is not the same as the net benefit of initiating aspirin use by a person in their 60s or 70s. This is because, in part, of the fact that CVD risk is heavily influenced by age. (Figure 2 (C) Persons who meet the eligibility criteria for aspirin use at a younger age (i.e.,  $\geq$  10% 10-year CVD risk in their 40s or 50s) typically have even higher CVD risk by their 60s or 70s compared with persons who first reach a 10% or greater 10-year CVD risk in their 60s or 70s, and may gain more benefit by continuing aspirin use than a person at lower risk might gain by initiating aspirin use.









cardiovascular outcome were low and high, and in participants with diabetes. Trials were low or high risk if the 10-year cardiovascular (CV) risk for the primary CV outcome was less than 10% or greater than or equal to 10%, respectively. The composite CV outcome included CV mortality, nonfatal myocardial infarction, and nonfatal stroke. Hazard ratios (HRs) and 95% credible intervals (Cris) were calculated using Bayesian meta-analysis of event counts. The absolute risk reductions and increases were calculated by multiplying the control event risk by the relative risk and 95% Cls derived by frequentist meta-analysis (eFigure 4 in Supplement 2). Heterogeneity was assessed using *P*<sup>2</sup> statistics. Gl indicates gastrointestinal. <sup>37</sup>The number of participants randomized to each arm in the Women's Health Study<sup>24</sup> was not reported, so event counts are omitted. <sup>b</sup>Upper CrI: 0.997.





#### **Figure 3 : Exploratory Cancer Outcomes**

| Efficacy                  | No. of<br>Studies | Aspirin          |                        | No Aspirin       |                        | Absolute Risk             |                  |                                     |    |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|----|
|                           |                   | No. of<br>Events | No. of<br>Participants | No. of<br>Events | No. of<br>Participants | Difference, %<br>(95% CI) | HR (95% Crl)     | Favors Favors No<br>Aspirin Aspirin | 12 |
| All participants          |                   |                  |                        |                  |                        |                           | 104 A21 A45      |                                     |    |
| Incident cancer           | 10                | 4507             | 63048                  | 4409             | 61475                  | 0.03 (-0.37 to 0.46)      | 1.01 (0.93-1.08) |                                     | 14 |
| Cancer mortality          | 12                | 1530             | 75353                  | 1447             | 73781                  | 0.05 (-0.11 to 0.23)      | 1.03 (0.96-1.11) |                                     | 17 |
| Low CV risk participants  |                   |                  |                        |                  |                        |                           |                  |                                     |    |
| Incident cancer           | 4                 | 2837             | 38905                  | 2730             | 39044                  | 0.41 (-0.13 to 1.01)      | 1.06 (0.95-1.24) |                                     | 18 |
| Cancer mortality          | 5                 | 823              | 49942                  | 748              | 50078                  | 0.16 (-0.06 to 0.42)      | 1.11 (0.93-1.33) |                                     | 5  |
| High CV risk participants |                   |                  |                        |                  |                        |                           |                  |                                     |    |
| Incident cancer           | 6                 | 1670             | 24143                  | 1679             | 22431                  | -0.30 (-0.76 to 0.19)     | 0.96 (0.90-1.03) |                                     | 3  |
| Cancer mortality          | 7                 | 707              | 25411                  | 699              | 23703                  | -0.13 (-0.41 to 0.17)     | 0.96 (0.86-1.06) |                                     | 0  |
| Participants with diabete | 25                |                  |                        |                  |                        |                           |                  |                                     |    |
| Incident cancer           | 3                 | 1091             | 9640                   | 1116             | 9655                   | -0.68 (-2.09 to 0.95)     | 0.95 (0.74-1.14) |                                     | 24 |
| Cancer mortality          | 4                 | 445              | 10667                  | 438              | 10685                  | 0.16 (-0.56 to 1.02)      | 1.05 (0.80-1.43) |                                     | 25 |
|                           |                   |                  |                        |                  |                        |                           | 0.5              | 1                                   | 2  |
|                           |                   |                  |                        |                  |                        |                           |                  | Hazard Ratio (95% Crl)              |    |

populations, and in patients with diabetes. The absolute risk reductions and increases were calculated by multiplying the control event risk by the relative risk, and 95% CIs derived by frequentist meta-analysis (eFigure 4 in Supplement 2). Study heterogeneity was assessed using I<sup>2</sup> statistics. HR indicates hazard ratio; Crl indicates credible interval; CV indicates cardiovascular. Data for the JPAD, JPPP, and WHS trials were extracted from subsequent trial publications on cancer outcomes.<sup>29-31</sup> Data for the HOT, BDS, and PHS (cancer mortality) and the HOT, BDS, AAA, and POPADAD (incident cancer) trials were extracted from previous meta-analyses on cancer outcomes.<sup>14</sup>

#### **Conclusions:**

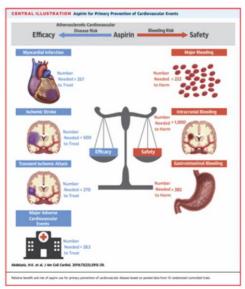
1. The decision to initiate low-dose aspirin use for the primary prevention of CVD in adults aged 40 to 59 years who have a 10% or greater 10-year cardiovascular risk should be individualized. Evidence indicates that the net benefit of aspirin use in this group is small. Persons who are not at increased risk for bleeding (baseline characteristics such as older age, male sex, history of GI ulcers, elevated mean BP, and NSAID use, have shown to increase the risk of aspirin-related bleeding) and are willing to receive low-dose aspirin daily are more likely to benefit. The benefits of initiating aspirin use are greater for individuals at higher risk for CVD events (e.g., those with >15% -20% 10-year CVD risk).

2. It is not recommended to initiate lowdose aspirin for the primary prevention of CVD in adults aged 60 years or older. It has no net benefit or the harms might outweigh the benefits.

3. Decisions about initiating aspirin use should be based on shared decision

making between clinicians and patients about the potential benefits and harms. Persons who place a higher value on the potential benefits than the potential harms may choose to initiate low-dose aspirin use. Persons who place a higher value on the potential harms or on the burden of taking a daily preventive medication than the potential benefits may choose not to initiate low-dose aspirin use.

4. Risk for bleeding increases modestly with advancing age. For persons who



have initiated aspirin use, the net benefits continue to accrue over time in the absence of a bleeding event. The net benefits become smaller with advancing age because of an increased risk for bleeding. Modelling data suggest that it may be reasonable to consider stopping aspirin use around age of 75 years.

5.Based on new analyses of the evidence from primary CVD prevention populations, longer-term follow up data from the Women's Health Study (WHS) and new trial evidence, the evidence is inadequate that low-dose aspirin use reduces colorectal cancer incidence or mortality.

6.The benefit appears similar for a low dose ( $\leq$  100 mg/day) and all doses that have been studied in CVD prevention trials (50 to 500 mg/day). A pragmatic approach would be to use 75/81/100 mg of aspirin daily, which is the most commonly available and prescribed dose.





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