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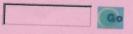
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Women Not Treated Equally With Cholesterol-Lowering Drugs

Health atch Medscape

By Jennifer Warner

Feb. 14 (CBSHealthWatch)—Despite proof that cholesterol-lowering drugs could save millions from an early death due to heart attack or stroke, a new study shows that the medications are vastly underused---especially among women patients.

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Researchers found treatment rates for both men and women with disease were far too low, but they say the lack of treatment in wo "particularly worrisome."

"The big message is that physicians are biased in treating womer heart disease and for cholesterol-lowering [in general], and it's a problem," says Dr. Michael Miller, director of Preventive Cardiolog University of Maryland Medical Center and lead author of the students.

Heart disease is the top killer of both men and women. Recent re has shown cholesterol-lowering drugs can significantly reduce the heart attack, and the use of these drugs has become part of the s treatment for heart disease, along with diet and exercise changes

The study compared the percentage of patients with high LDL, or cholesterol levels who were offered cholesterol-lowering drugs from 1997. Researchers found rates for men improved slightly from 54%, but rates actually declined among women from 38% in 1994 in 1997.

"We can't make any excuses anymore," says Dr. Miller. "Here me women came in, they had coronary angiograms, they had the exa

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