

# Contemporary Prevention of Major Cardiovascular Events. An Existential Crisis

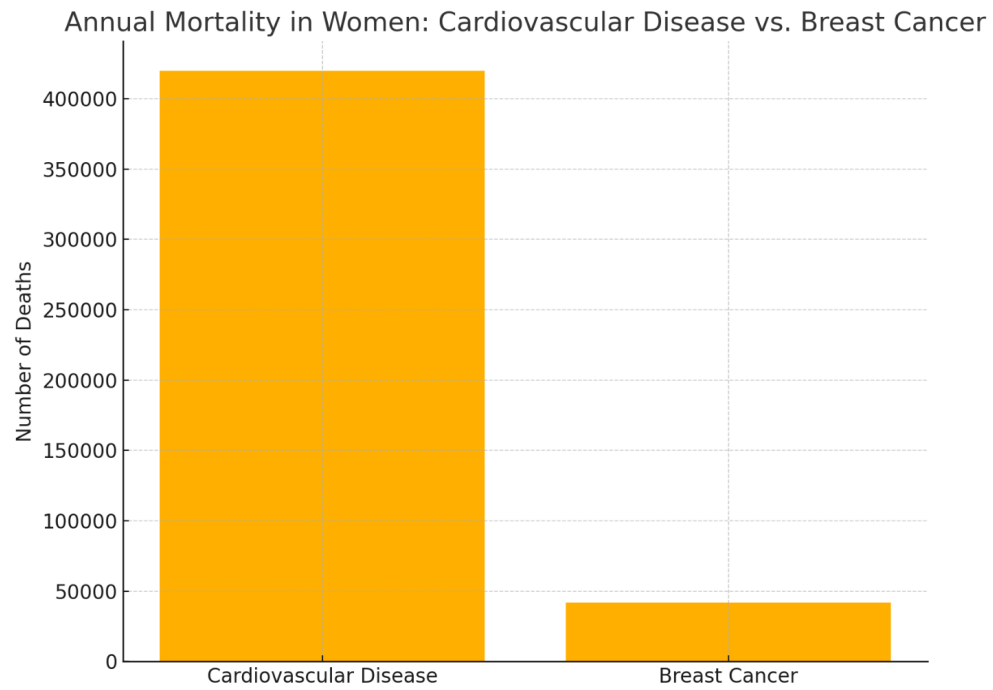
Nelson P. Trujillo, M.D. F.A.C.C.  
Boulder Heart  
May 15, 2025

**18,000,000 Deaths World Wide**  
**1 every 40 seconds**



## Annual Mortality in Women: Cardiovascular Disease vs. Breast Cancer

... X





HE DIED OF  
NATURAL CAUSES.

YOU PUSHED  
HIM OFF A ROOF.

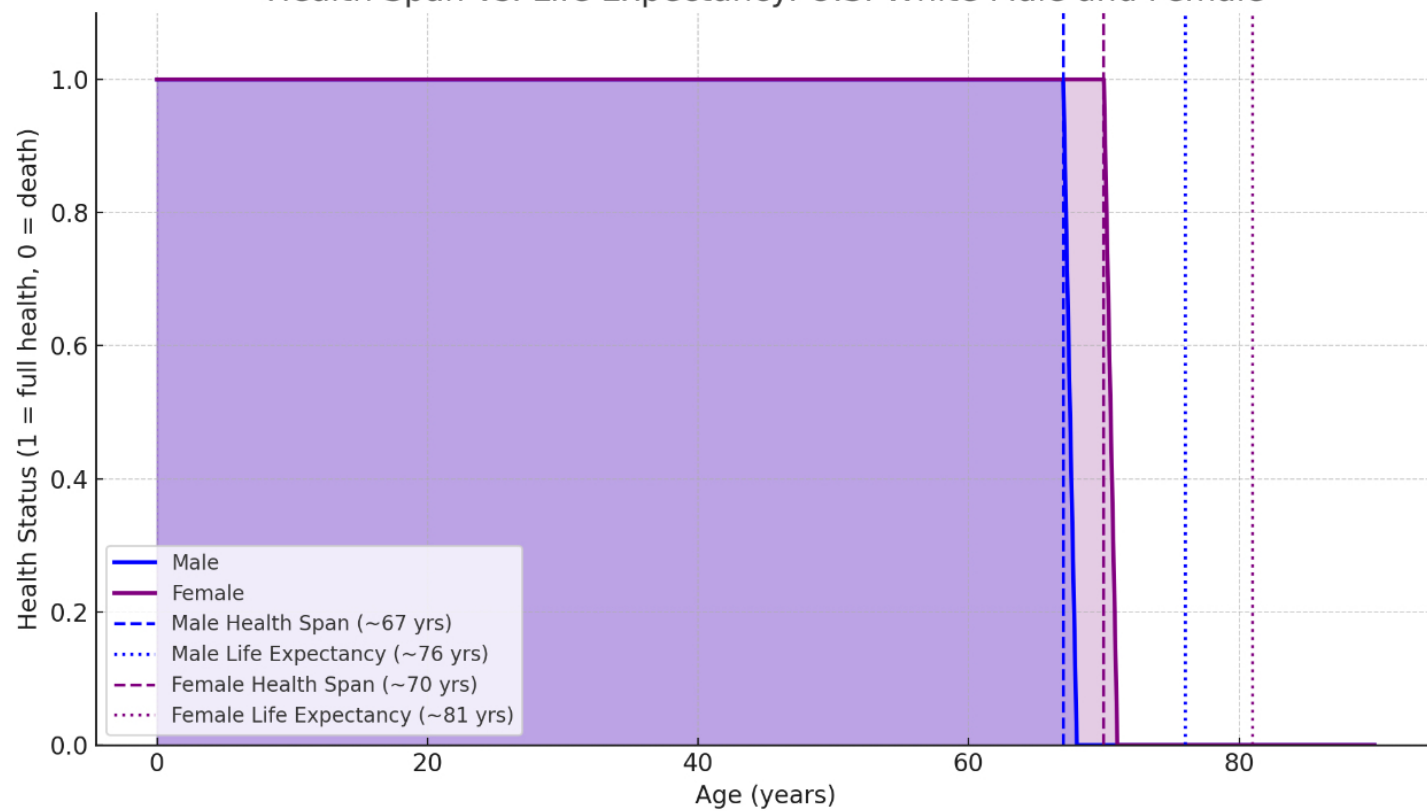
GRAVITY IS  
NATURAL.



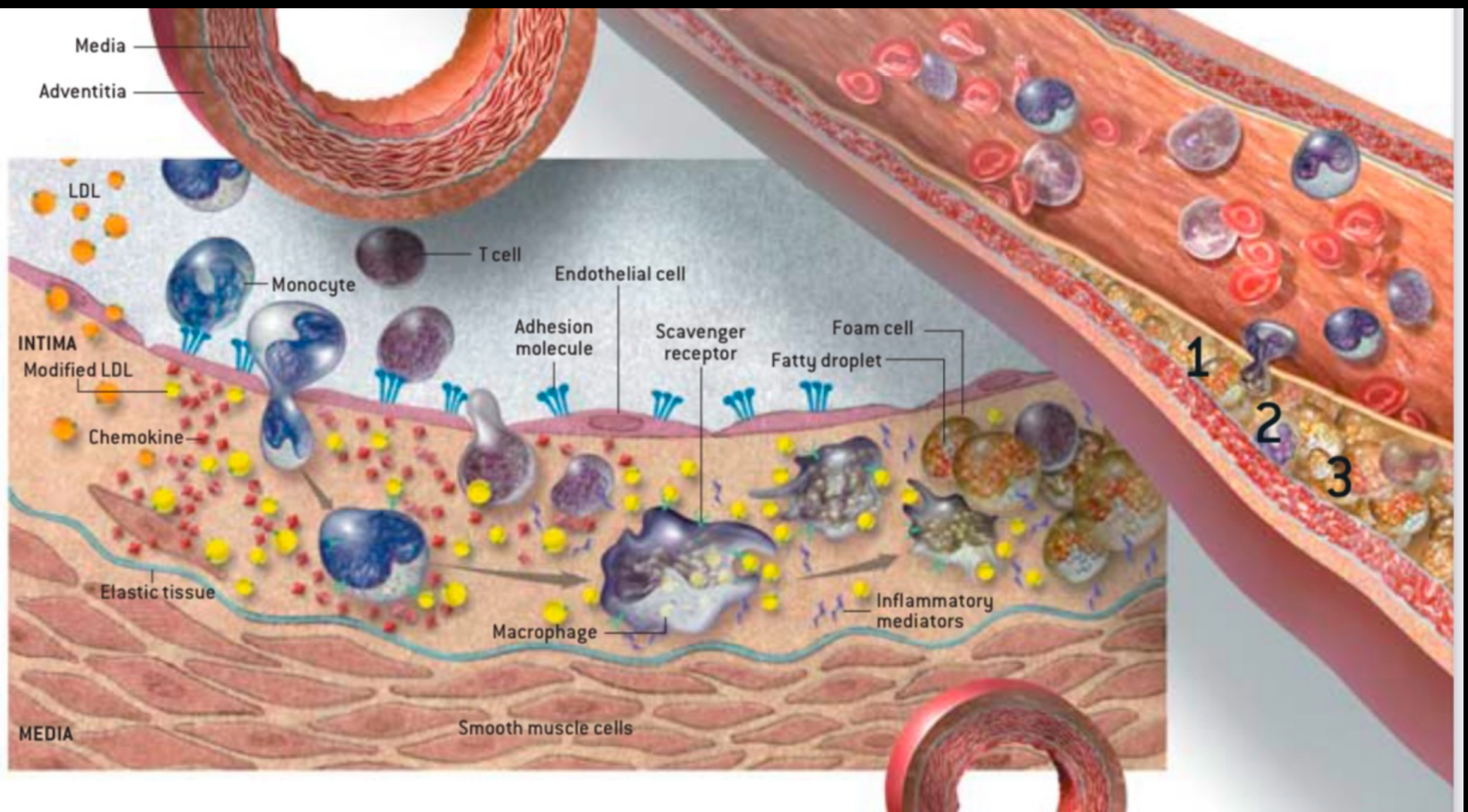
| A reconstruction of Ötzi the Iceman, who lived and died in the European Alps some 5,200 years ago. His naturally mummified remains were discovered by German hikers on September 19, 1991.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT CLARK, NAT GEO IMAGE COLLECTION

Health Span vs. Life Expectancy: U.S. White Male and Female







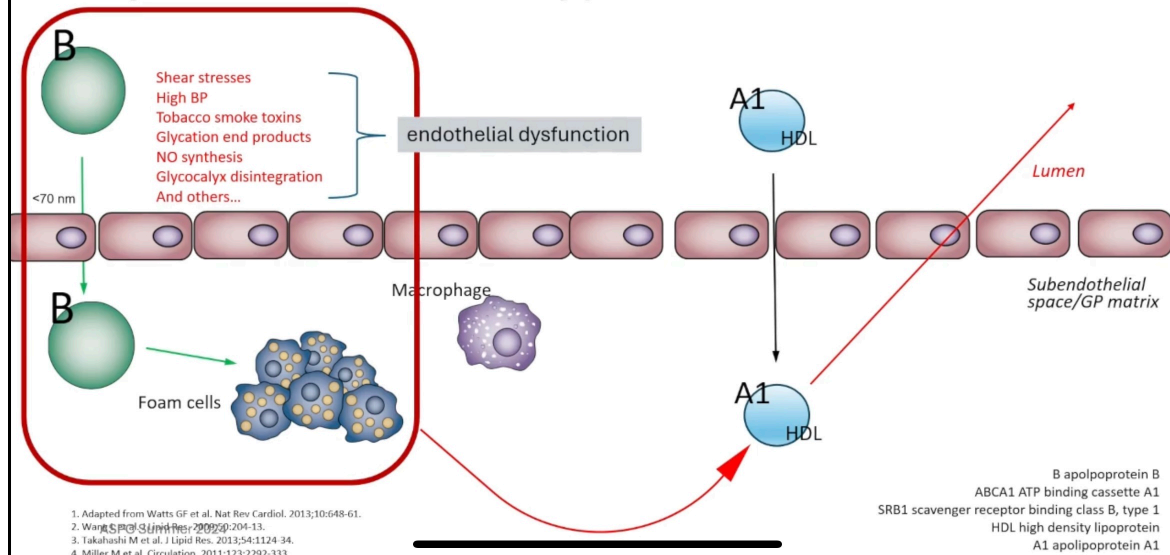
# Endothelial Health

Impaired Vasodilation

Inflammation

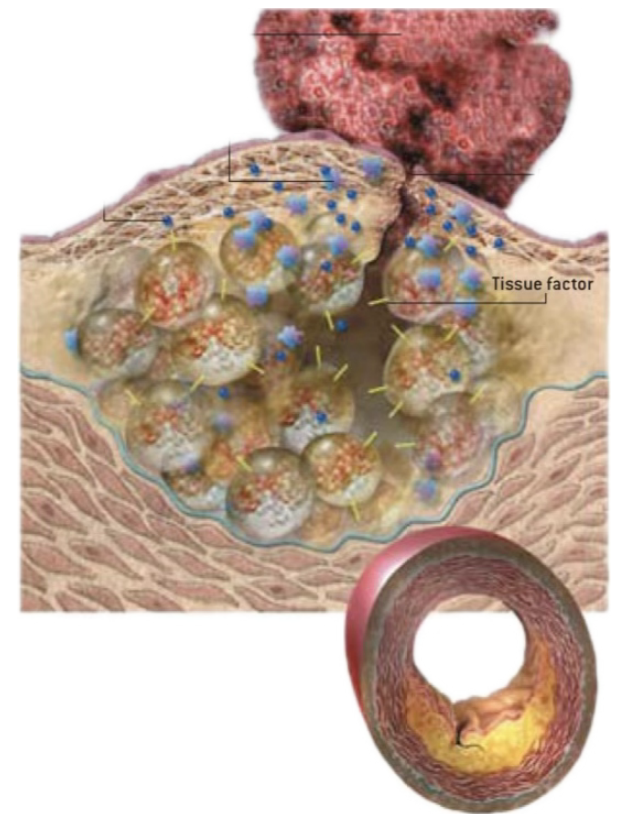
Thrombosis

## Response to retention hypothesis

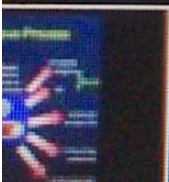


1. Adapted from Watts GF et al. Nat Rev Cardiol. 2013;10:648-61.
2. Wang SM et al. J Lipid Res. 2009;50:204-13.
3. Takahashi M et al. J Lipid Res. 2013;54:1124-34.
4. Miller M et al. Circulation. 2011;123:2292-333.



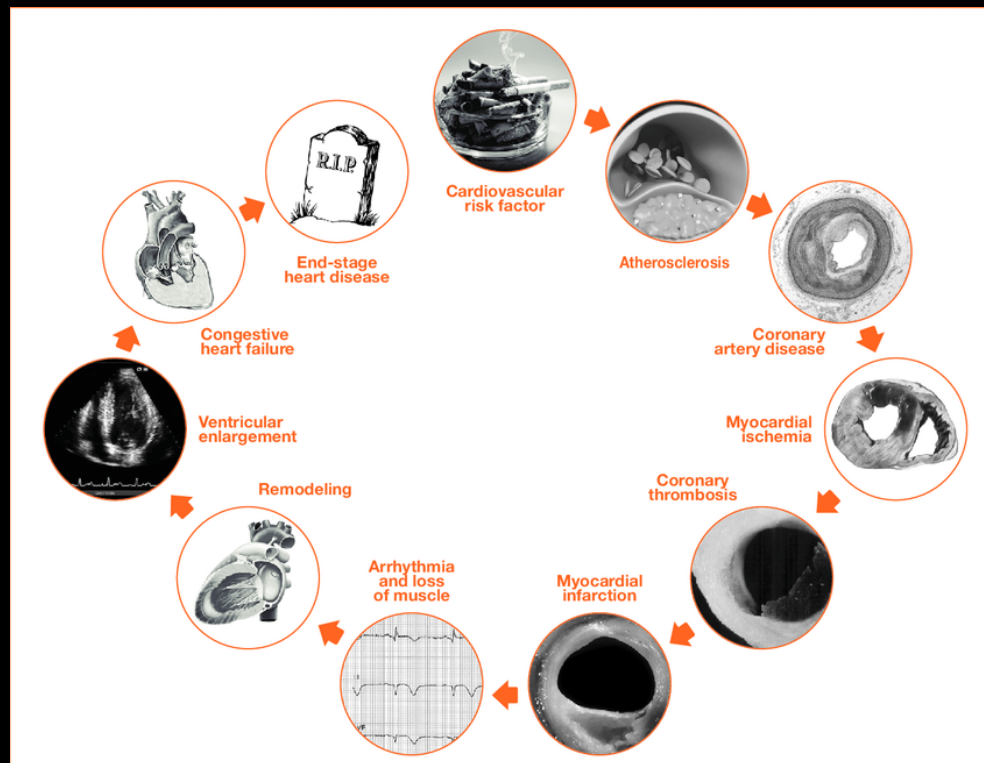




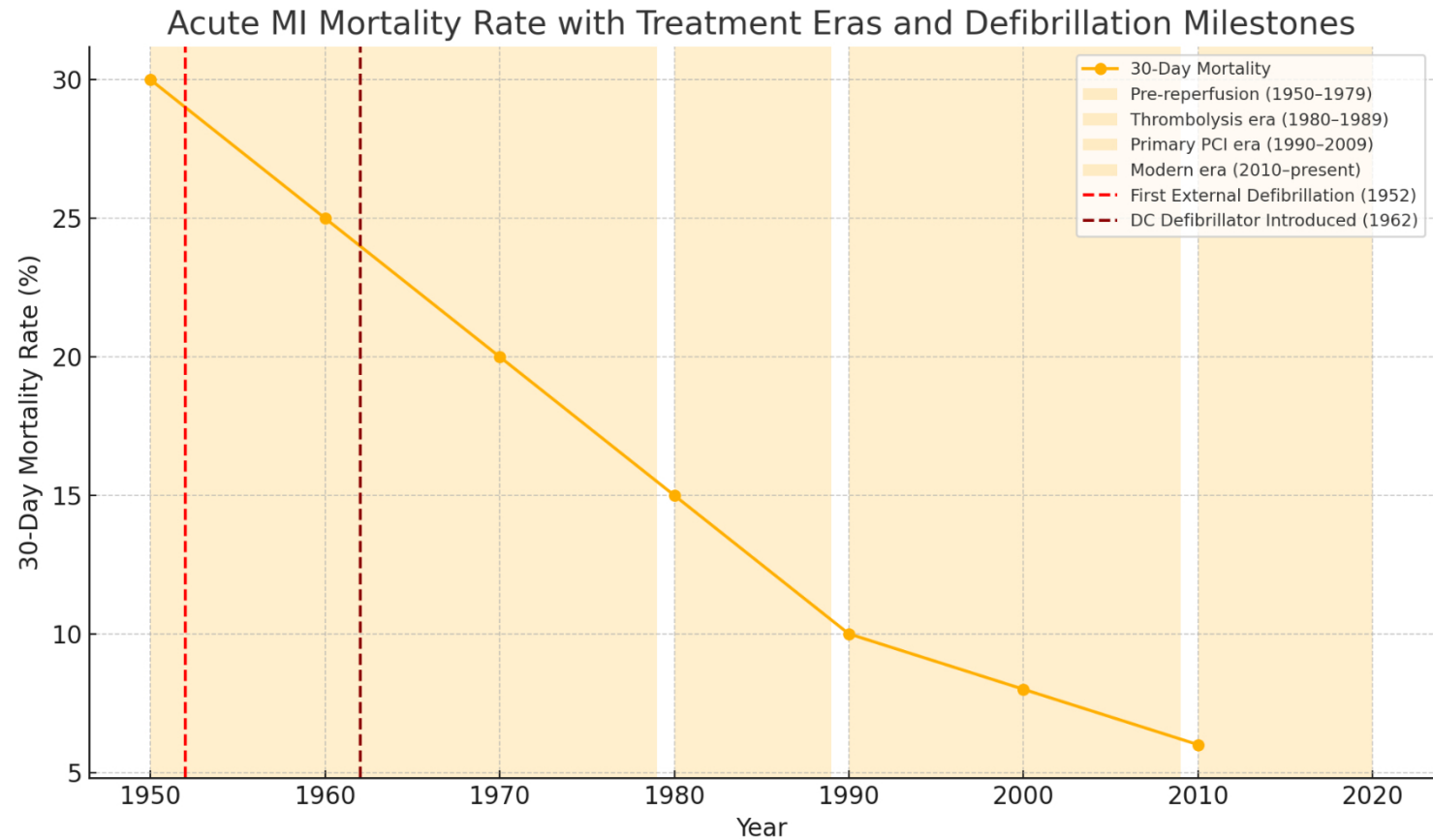




# Cardiovascular Disease is a continuum



## Acute MI Mortality Rate with Treatment Eras and Defibrillation Milestones



# Focus of an ASCD Risk Reduction Visit

- Life Style and Health Behaviors
- Medical Management
- Shared Decision Making
- Behavioral Counseling
- Medication Reconciliation

# Screening Guidelines

- - ACC/AHA: Screen adults 20-49 years, repeat every 4–6 years. Emphasis on life style choices and estimating lifetime risk.
- Adults 40-75 Routine Assessment of traditional risk factors using Cohort Equations
- Adults > 75 Individualized approach in the setting of life expectancy and overall health status
- - Lipid panel includes LDL-C, HDL-C, triglycerides, non-HDL-C

# Risk Assessment

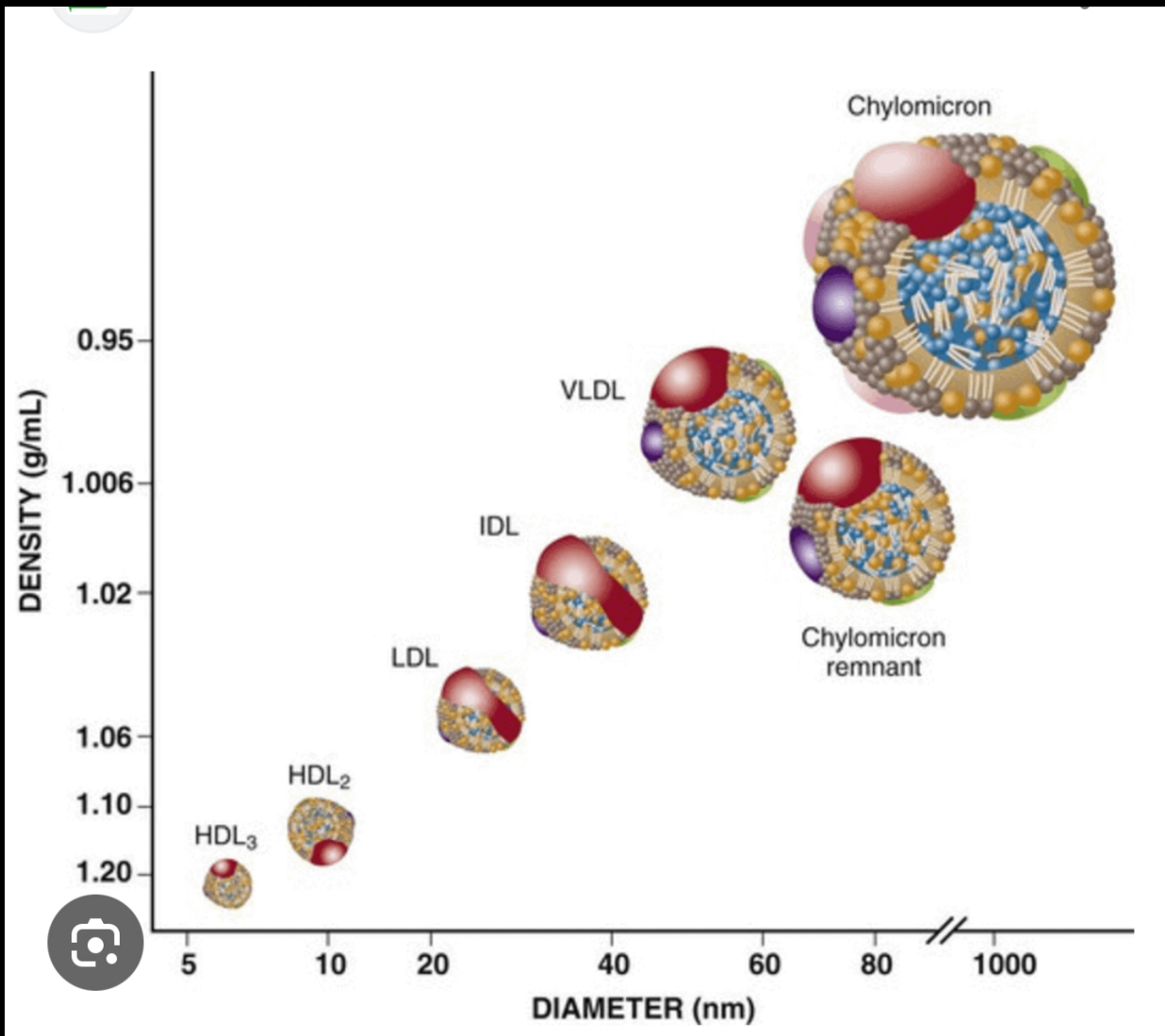
- Primary prevention in ASCVD refers to preventing the initial occurrence of an ASCVD event in individuals who have not yet developed clinical manifestations of the disease.
- Secondary prevention refers to a comprehensive set of measures to prevent recurrent ASCVD events and improve long term prognosis.

# Risk Stratification

- - ASCVD risk calculator: categorizes risk as low, borderline, intermediate, high.
- PREVENT
- MESA
- QRISK3
- SCORE2
- INTERHEART

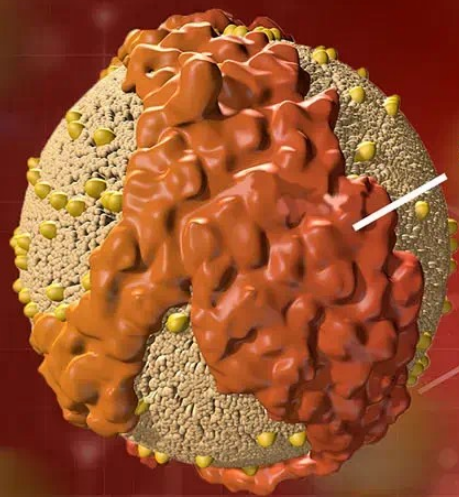
# Attributable Risk InterHeart Trial

- Abnormal lipids (PAR 49.2%)
- Smoking (PAR 35.7%)
- Psychosocial factors (PAR 32.5%)
- Abdominal Obesity (PAR 20.1%)
- Hypertension (PAR 17.9%)
- Lack of Daily Consumption Fruits and Vegetables (PAR 13.7%)
- Lack of Regular Physical Activity (PAR 12.2%)
- Diabetes (PAR 9.9%)
- Alcohol (PAR 6.7%)



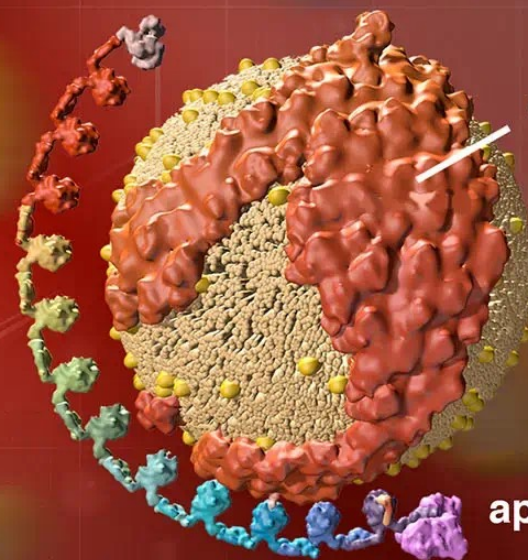


**LDL**



**apo(B)**

**Lp(a)**



**apo(B)**

**apo(a)**

# Cardiovascular Risk

- Majority of ASCVD risk attributable to:

- Smoking
- Poor Diet
- Obesity
- Sedentary Lifestyle
- hypertension
- Hyperlipidemia
- Diabetes

Ideal cardiovascular health defined as having all 7 factors at goal is very rare among US adults. It is estimated that 87% of middle-aged US adults and 95% of individuals  $\geq 60$  years old meet  $\leq 4$  of these health metrics.<sup>1</sup>

CIRCULATION 2019 GUIDLINES

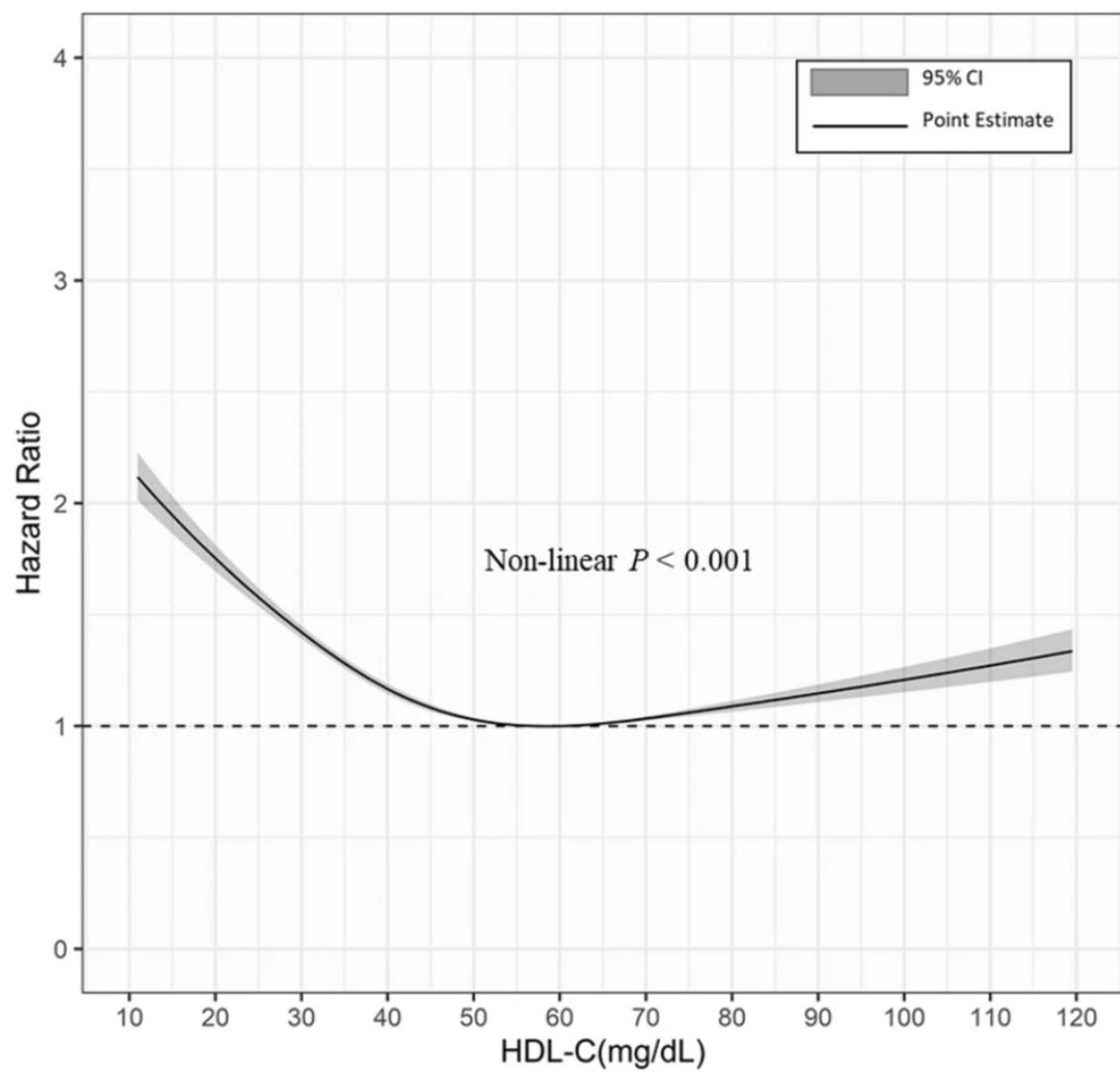
## Treatment Considerations

### Risk-enhancing Factors for Clinician-Patient Risk Discussion

- **Family history of premature ASCVD;** (males <55 years; females <65 years)
- **Primary hypercholesterolemia** (LDL-C 160-189 mg/dL (4.1- 4.8 mmol/L); non-HDL-C 190-219 mg/dL (4.9-5.6 mmol/L).
- **Metabolic syndrome** (increased waist circumference, elevated TG (>150 mg/dL, elevated BP, elevated glucose, low HDL-C (<40 mg/dL in men, <50 mg/dL in women) are factors; tally of 3 makes the diagnosis)
- **Chronic kidney disease** (eGFR 15- 59 ml/min per 1.73 m<sup>2</sup> with or without albuminuria; not treated with dialysis or kidney transplantation)
- **Chronic inflammatory conditions** such as psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis (RA) or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)
- **History of premature menopause (before age 40) and history of pregnancy-associated conditions that increase later ASCVD risk such as pre-eclampsia**
- **High-risk ethnicities** (e.g. South Asian ancestry)
- **Lipid/Biomarkers:** Associated with increased ASCVD risk
  - Persistently\* elevated, primary hypertriglyceridemia ( ≥175 mg/dl);
  - If measured:
    - **High-sensitivity C-reactive protein** - (≥2.0 mg/L)
    - **Elevated lipoprotein (a)** - A relative indication for its measurement is family history of premature ASCVD. An Lp(a) ≥ 50 mg/dL or ≥125 nmol/L constitutes a risk enhancing factor especially at higher levels of Lp(a).
    - **Elevated apo B ≥130 mg/dL** - A relative indication for its measurement would be triglyceride ≥ 200 mg/dL. A level ≥ 130 mg/dL corresponds to an LDL-C ≥160 mg/dL and constitutes a risk enhancing factor.
    - **ABI <0.9**

AIDS indicates acquired immunodeficiency syndrome; ABI, ankle-brachial index; apoB, apolipoprotein B; ASCVD, atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease; eGFR, estimated glomerular filtration rate; HDL-C, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol; HIV, human immunodeficiency virus; LDL-C, low-density lipoprotein cholesterol; Lp(a), lipoprotein (a); and RA, rheumatoid arthritis.

\*Optimally, 3 determinations



# Novel Risk 2025

Cannabis

Microplastics

## Cannabis Use Substantially Increases Risk of Heart Attack

Mar 24, 2025

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) [Save to Library](#) [Print](#)

### Citation:

Kamel I, Mahmoud A, Twayana A. et al. Myocardial infarction and cardiovascular risks associated with cannabis use: A multicenter retrospective study. *JACC Adv*. Published online March 18, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jacadv.2025.101698>

## Microplastics Possibly Associated With Chronic NCDs

Mar 25, 2025

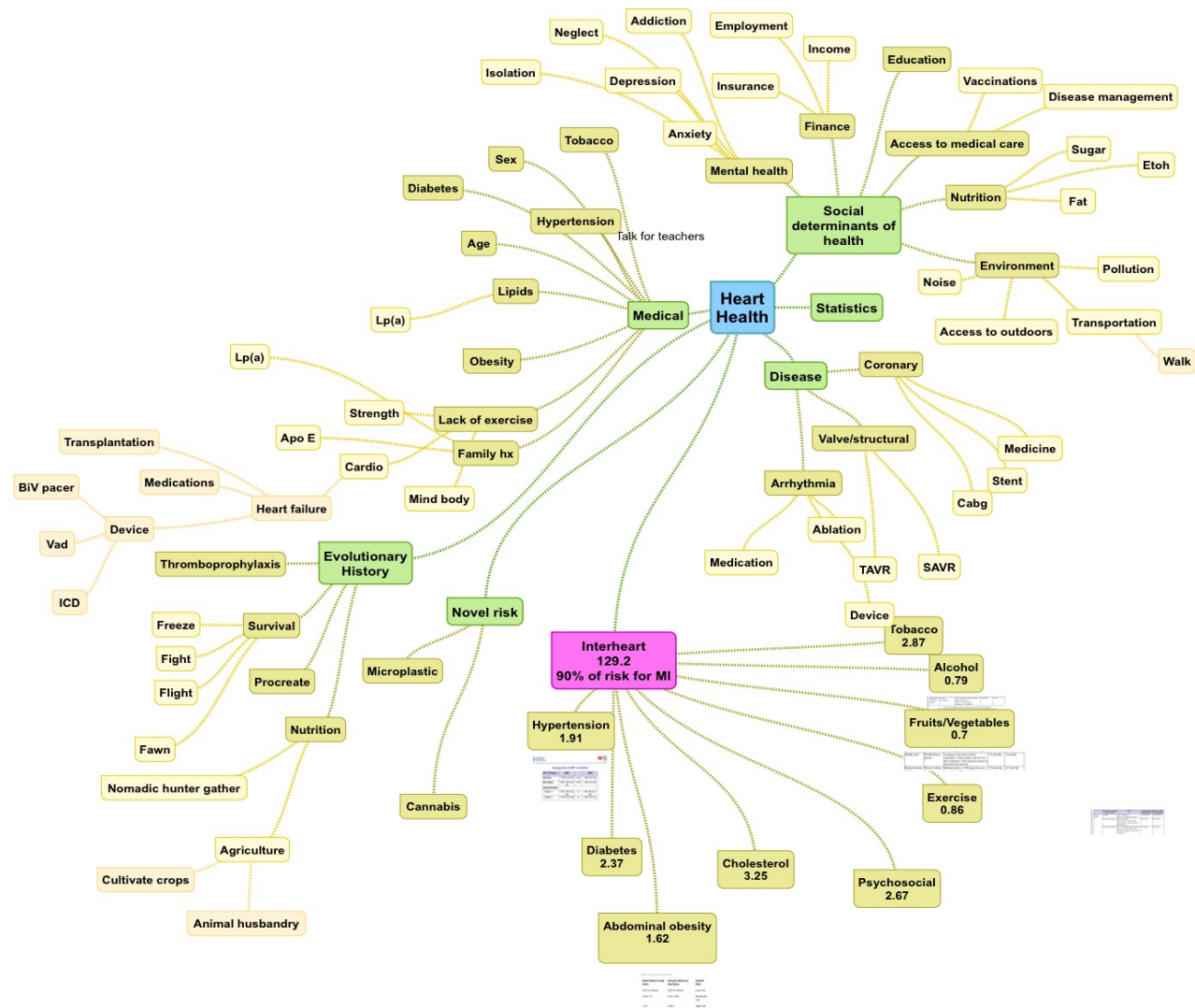
### ACC News Story

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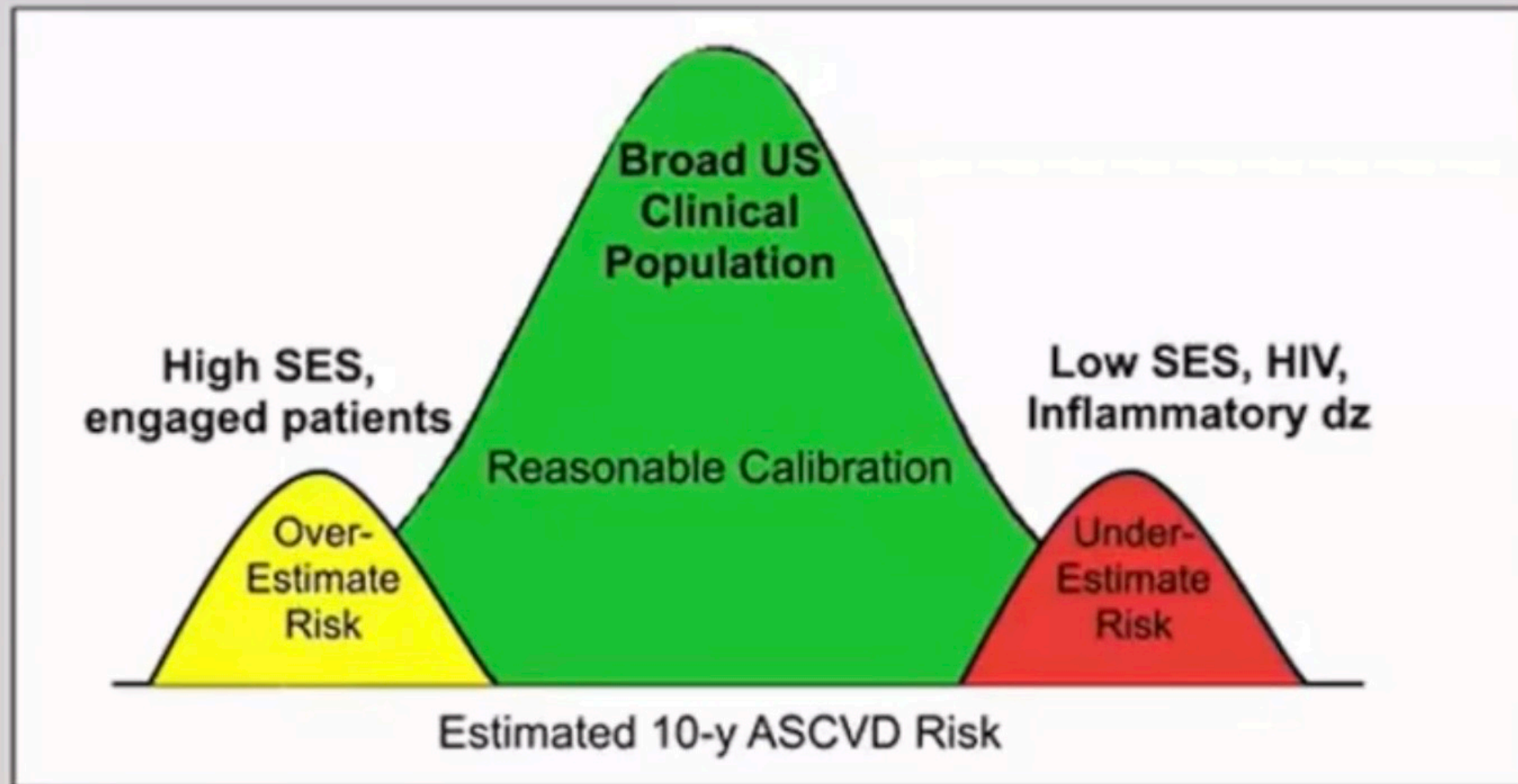
On this page: [Resources](#)

Microplastic exposure is associated with a higher prevalence of chronic noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) including hypertension, diabetes and stroke, according to a study presented at ACC.25 in Chicago [2](#).





4-19% of major adverse cardiac events occur in patients with no standard modifiable CV risk factors.



From Lloyd-Jones D Risk Assessment Nov 2018

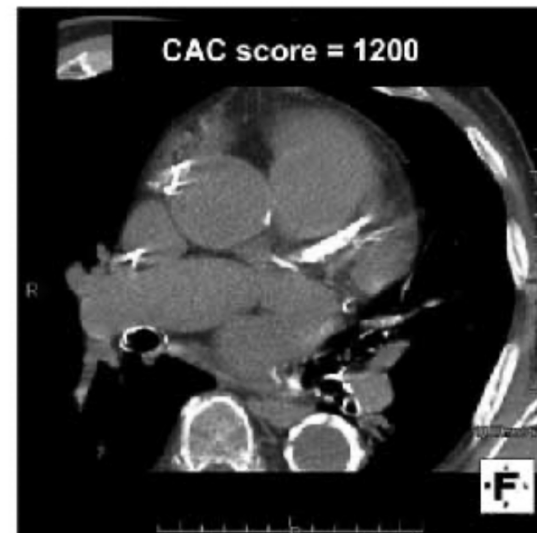
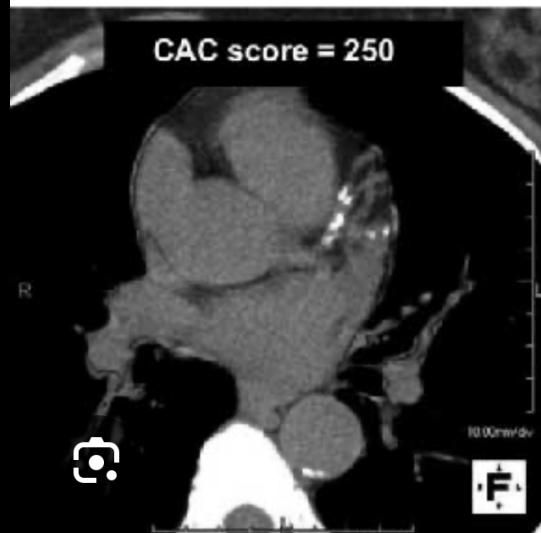
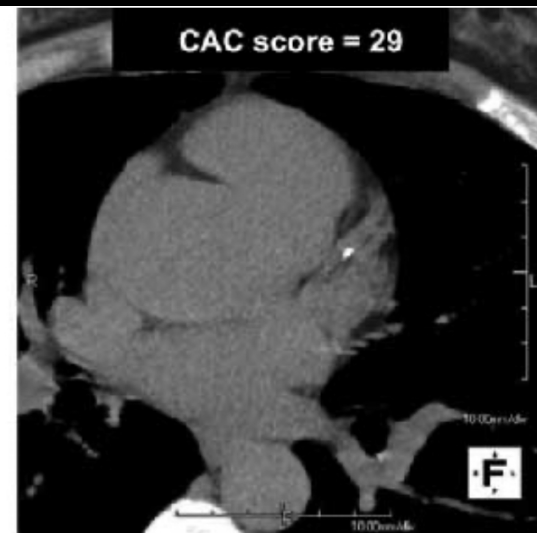
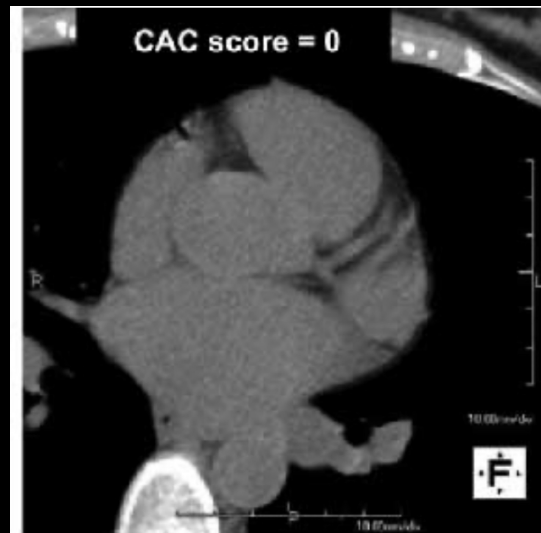




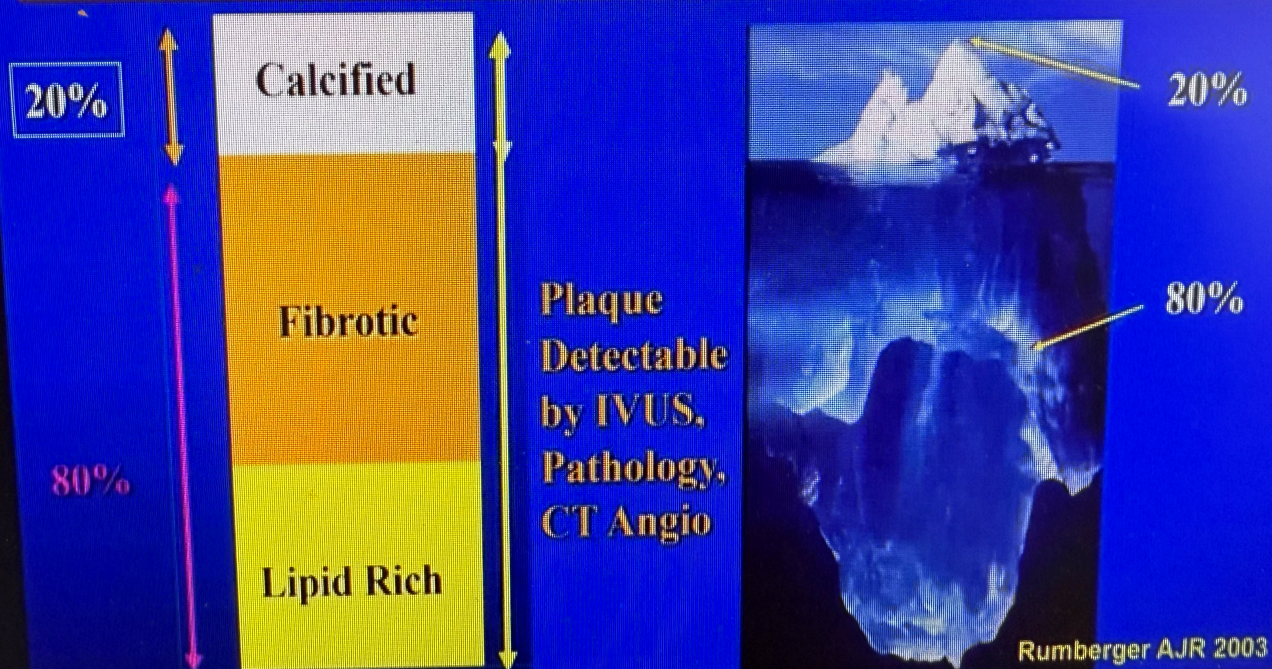
LESS CHOLESTEROL  
REGULAR CHECKUPS  
NO NICOTINE  
NO ALCOHOL  
LOW SODIUM  
MODERATE EXERCISE  
NO SUGAR



Colgate

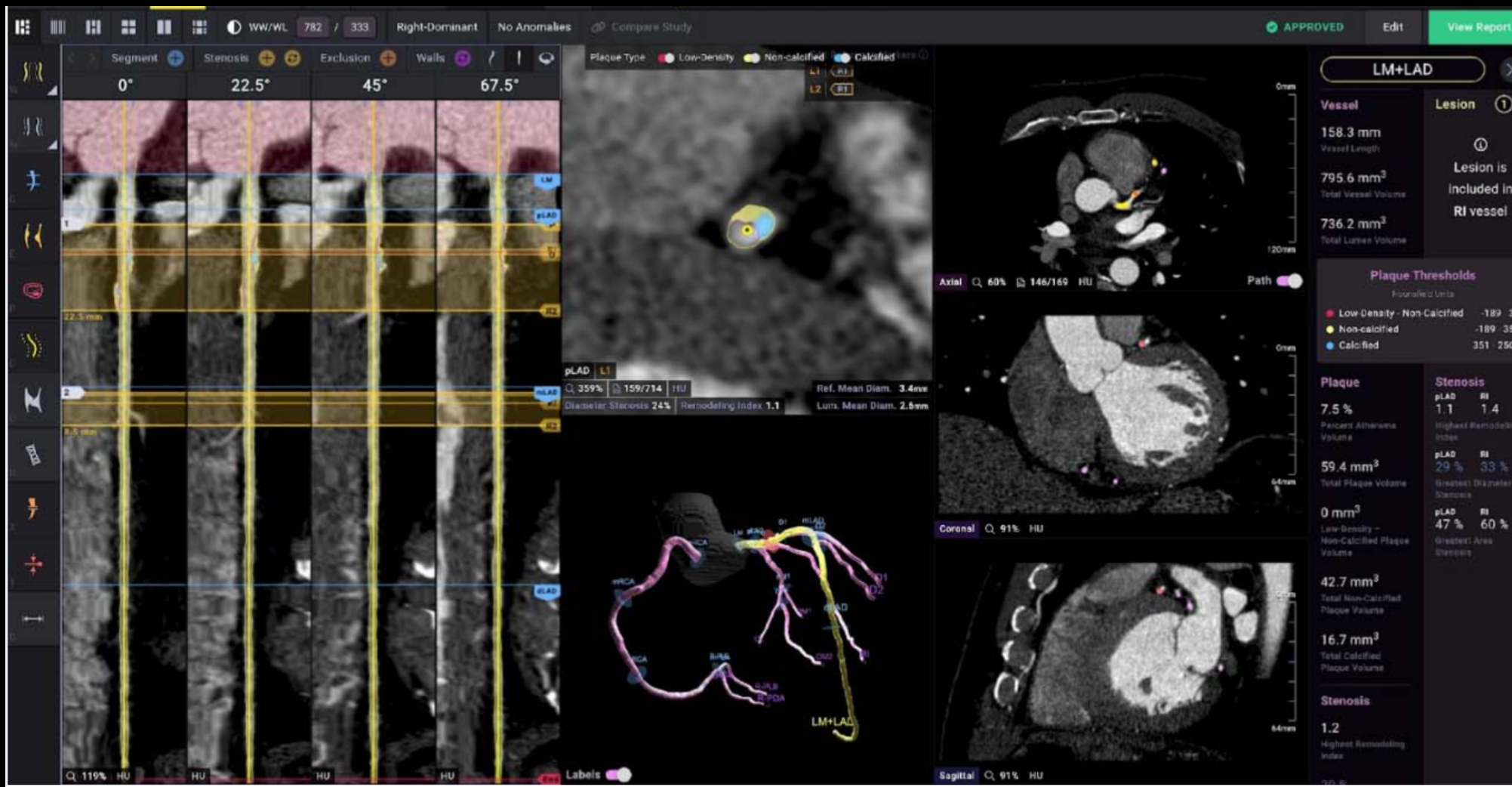


## Total Coronary Artery Plaque and EBCT Coronary Calcium



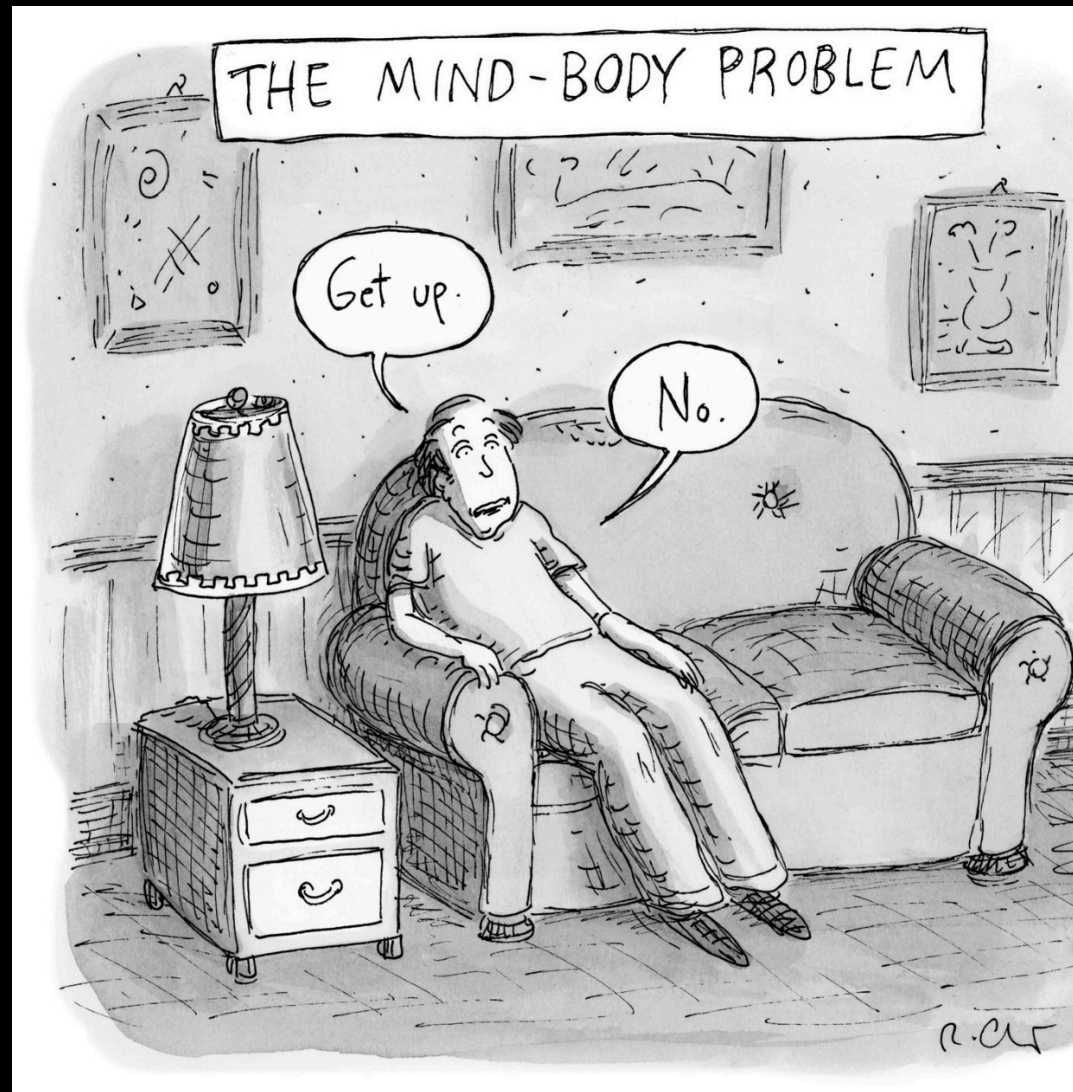






# Prevention

- Lifestyle (intensive cardiac rehab.)
  - tobacco
  - exercise
  - Whole food plant based/Mediterranean/DASH Diet
  - Stress/Isolation
  - Weight
- Pharmacological
  - ASA/Plavix
  - Statins/PCSK-9
  - Ace/entresto
  - Beta-blockers
  - Aldactone
  - SGLT-2inhibitors/GLP1-agonist

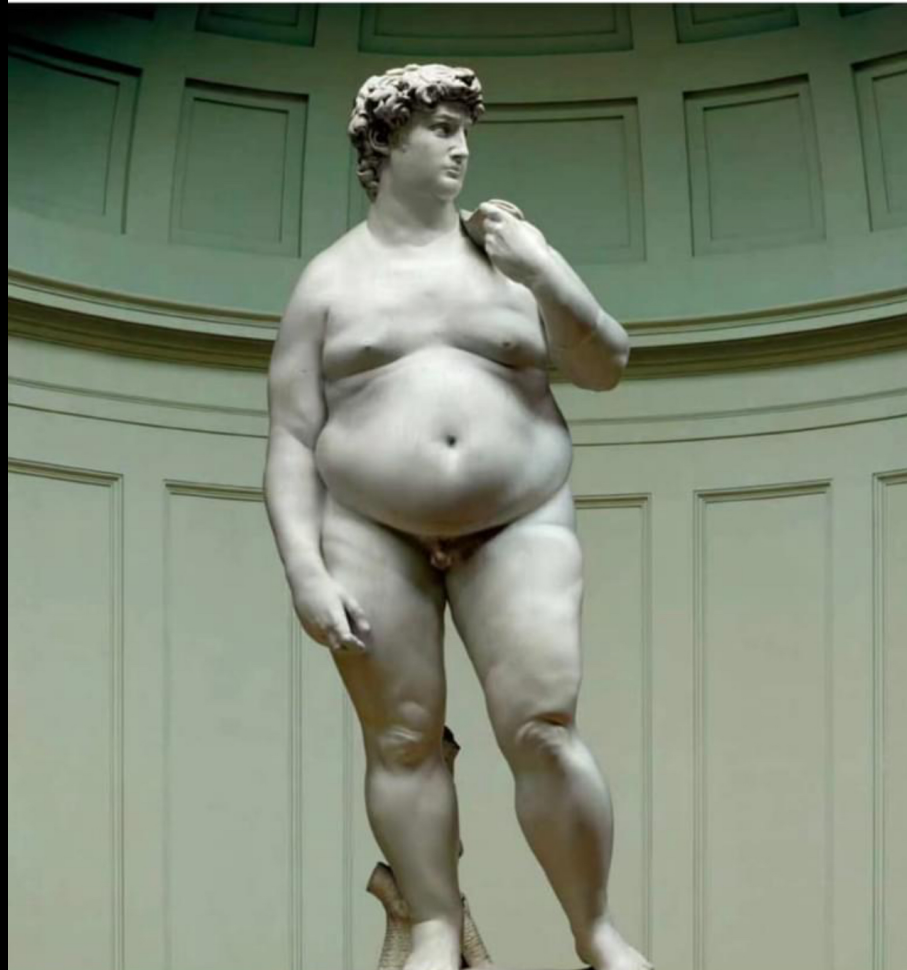


# Non-Pharmacologic Management

- - Diet: Whole Food/Plant Based, Mediterranean, DASH, reduced saturated/trans fats, increased fiber.
- - Exercise: 150 min/week of moderate-vigorous aerobic activity.
- - Weight loss and smoking cessation improve lipid profiles.



*Statue of David returns to Italy  
after 3 years in the USA*



# ROBERT

**Before**

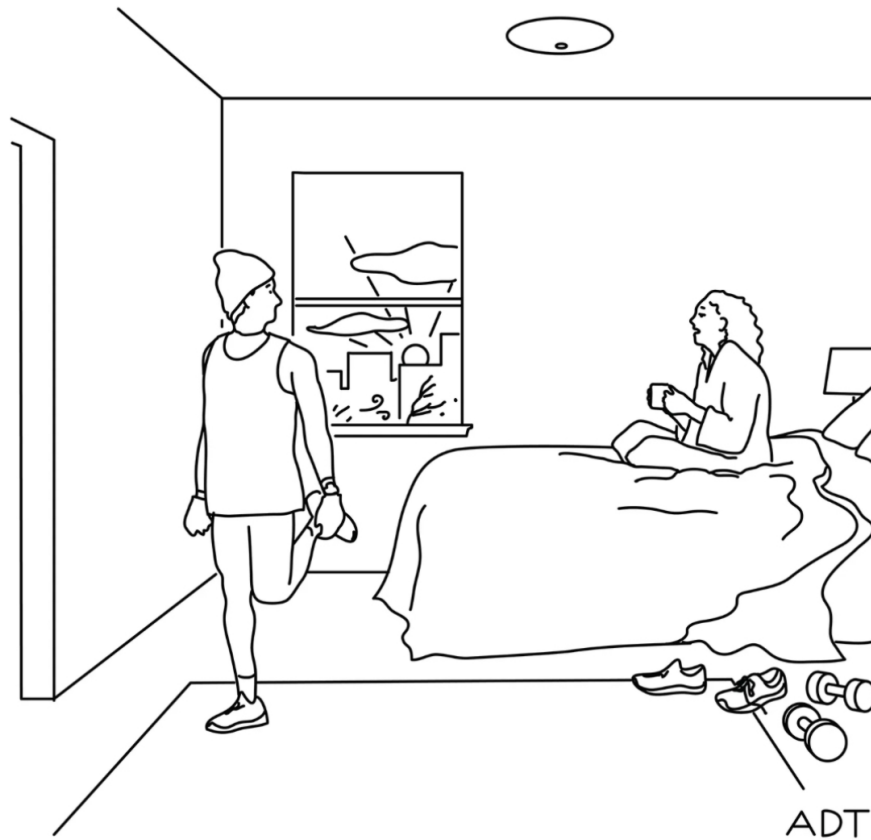


**After**



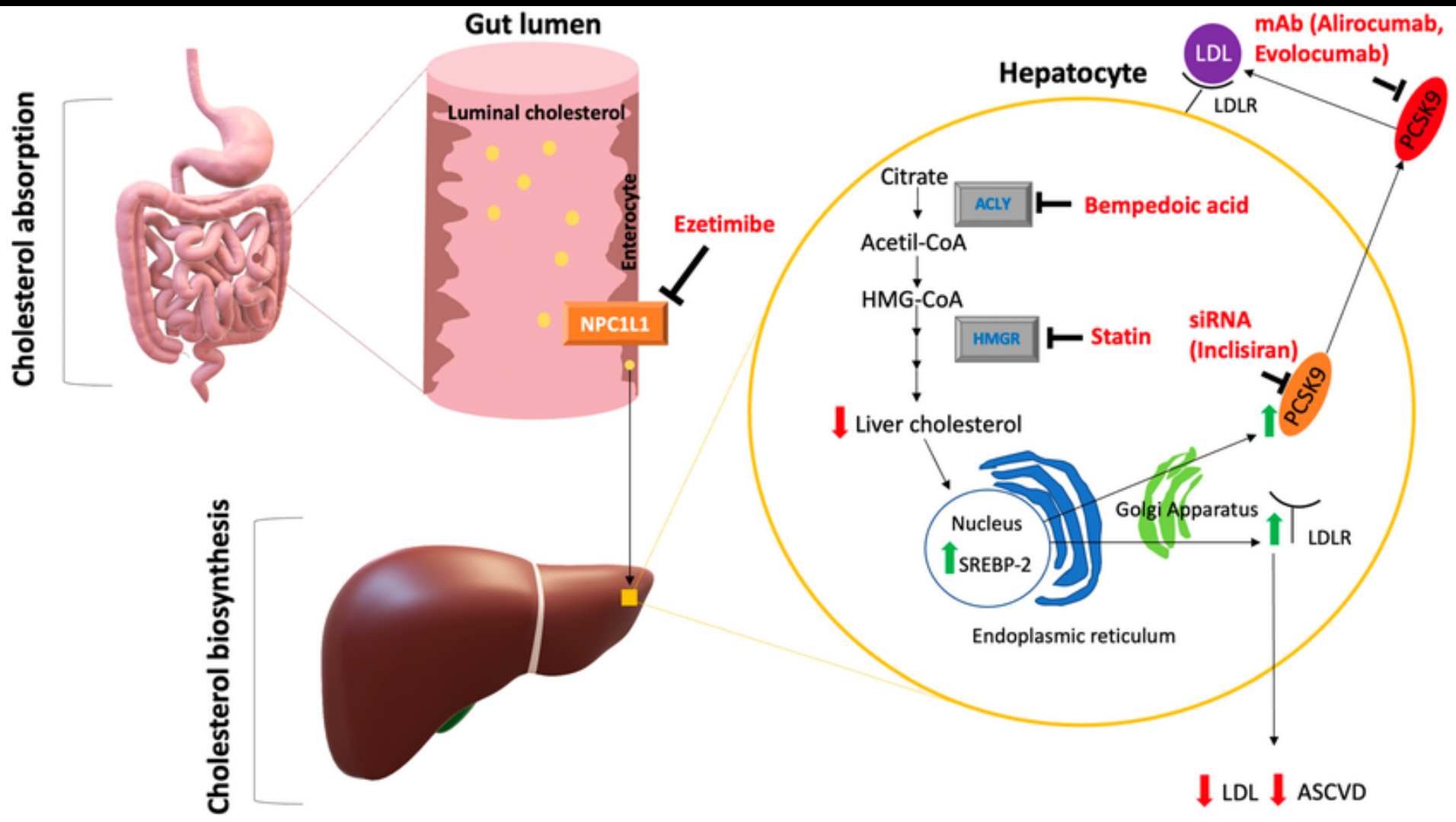
**In only 2 weeks  
Robert lost his glasses**



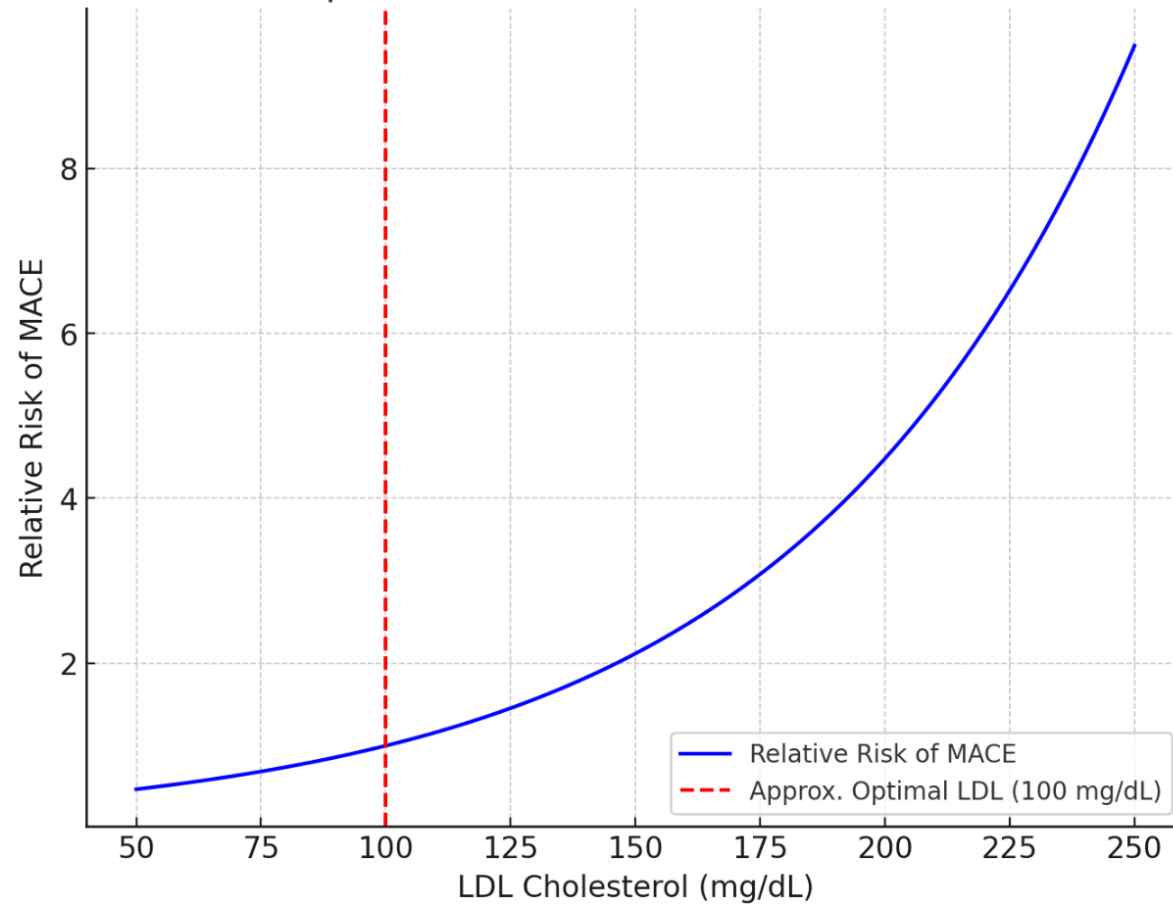


*“I’ve decided to focus less on cardio and more on strength to get out of bed in the morning.”*

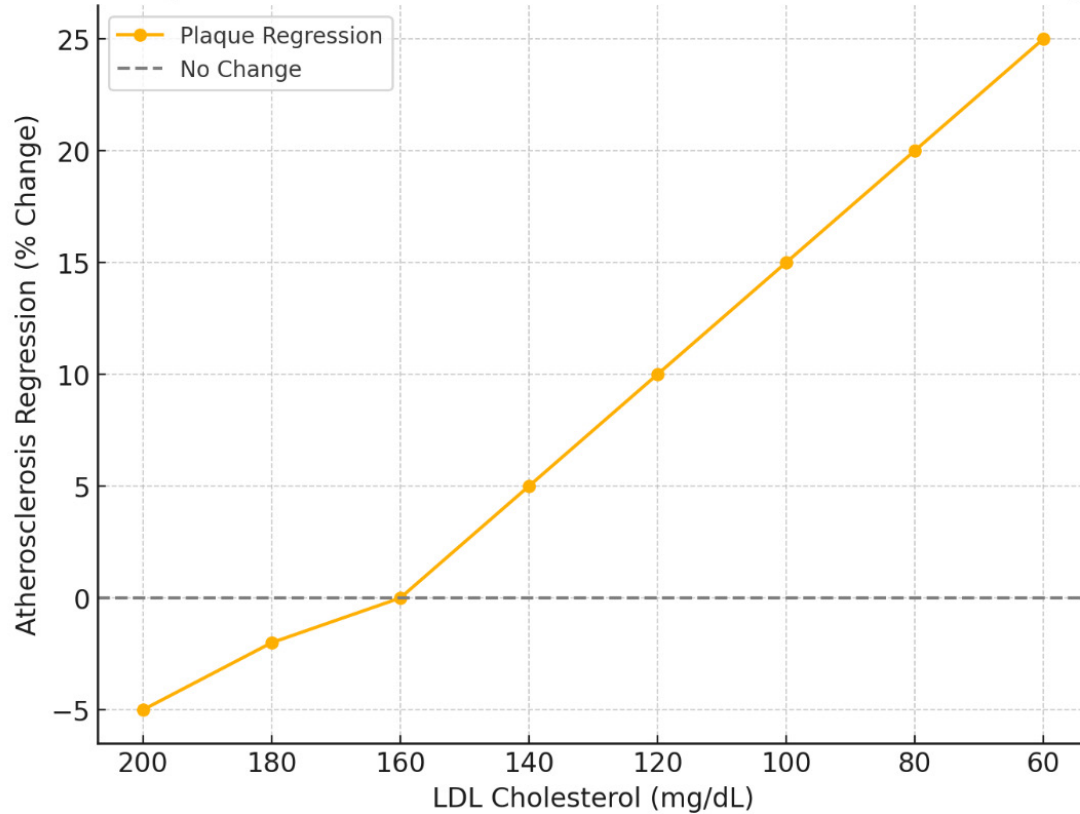




Relationship Between LDL Cholesterol and MACE Risk

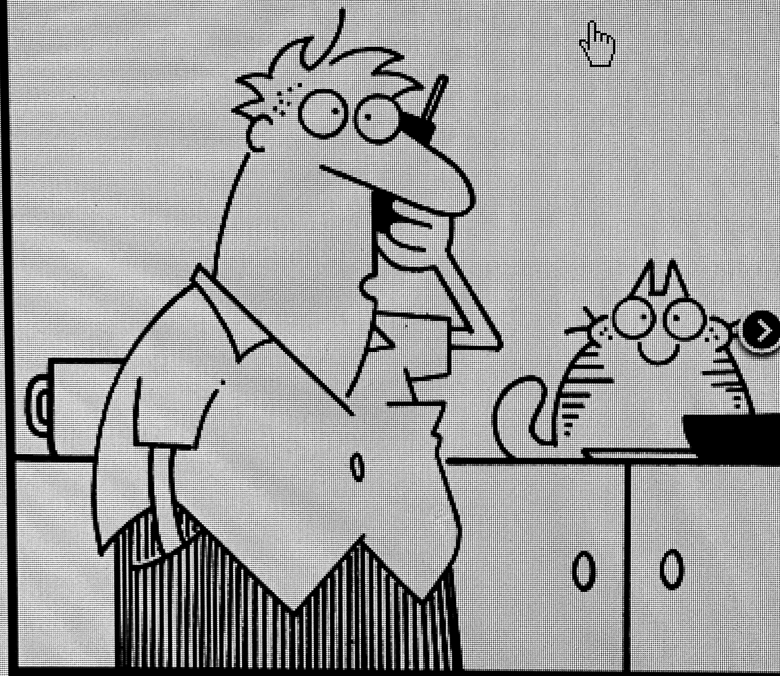


Relationship Between LDL Cholesterol and Atherosclerosis Regression



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**"I'd like a large pizza with double cheese,  
sausage, pepperoni, meatballs, bacon,  
Lipitor, Zetia, Vytorin and Zocor."**

Cartoon ID: toon266



# 10,249

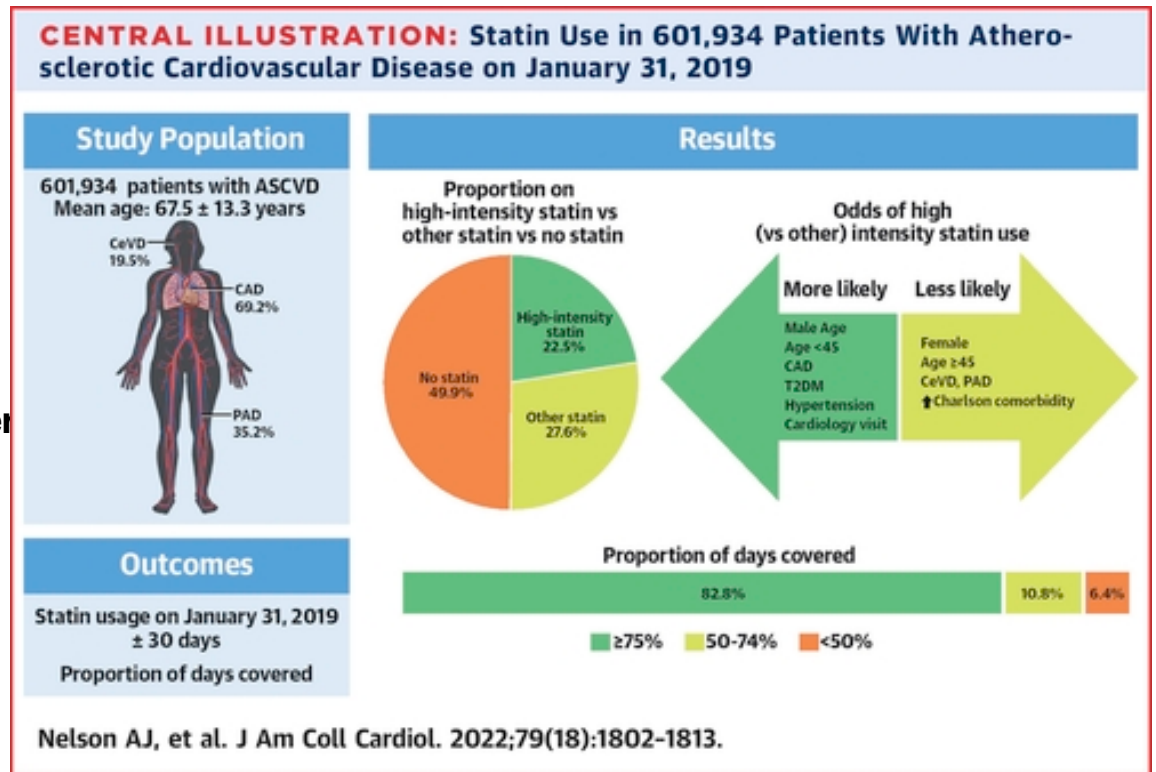


"How much longer do I have before I have  
to change to a healthy lifestyle?"

# How good are we?

Non adherence  
Side Effects  
Worsening Co-morbidities  
Provider Directions  
Genetic differences  
Therapeutic inertia

Hazard Ratio of 3.45 all cause mortality over  
years



UUUUUUUGH!

# Dinner with Larry

# Development and Validation of a Protein-Based Risk Score for Cardiovascular Outcomes Among Patients With Stable Coronary Heart Disease

Peter Ganz <sup>1</sup>, Bettina Heidecker <sup>2</sup>, Kristian Hveem <sup>3</sup>, Christian Jonasson <sup>3</sup>, Shintaro Kato <sup>4</sup>, Mark R Segal <sup>5</sup>, David G Sterling <sup>6</sup>, Stephen A Williams <sup>6</sup>

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 27327800 DOI: [10.1001/jama.2016.5951](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2016.5951)

## Abstract

**Importance:** Precise stratification of cardiovascular risk in patients with coronary heart disease (CHD) is needed to inform treatment decisions.

**Objective:** To derive and validate a score to predict risk of cardiovascular outcomes among patients with CHD, using large-scale analysis of circulating proteins.

**Design, setting, and participants:** Prospective cohort study of participants with stable CHD. For the derivation cohort (Heart and Soul study), outpatients from San Francisco were enrolled from 2000 through 2002 and followed up through November 2011 ( $\leq 11.1$  years). For the validation cohort (HUNT3, a Norwegian population-based study), participants were enrolled from 2006 through 2008 and followed up through April 2012 (5.6 years).

**Exposures:** Using modified aptamers, 1130 proteins were measured in plasma samples.

**Main outcomes and measures:** A 9-protein risk score was derived and validated for 4-year probability of myocardial infarction, stroke, heart failure, and all-cause death. Tests, including the C statistic, were used to assess performance of the 9-protein risk score, which was compared with the Framingham secondary event model, refit to the cohorts in this study. Within-person change in the 9-protein risk score was evaluated in the Heart and Soul study from paired samples collected 4.8 years apart.

**Results:** From the derivation cohort, 938 samples were analyzed, participants' median age at enrollment was 67.0 years, and 82% were men. From the validation cohort, 971 samples were analyzed, participants' median age at enrollment was 70.2 years, and 72% were men. In the derivation cohort, C statistics were 0.66 for refit Framingham, 0.74 for 9-protein, and 0.75 for refit

## Purpose of the CVD Secondary Panel Study

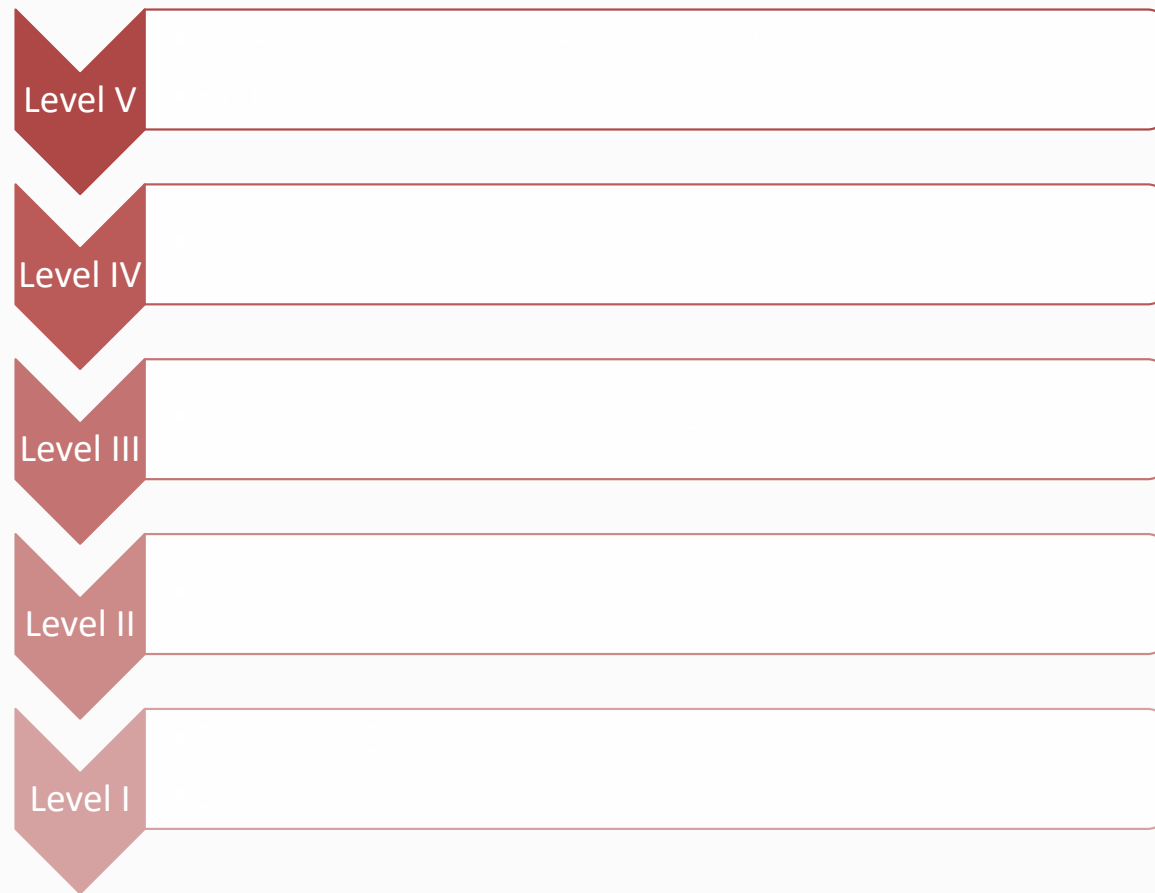
- Collect real-world feedback about the test
- Obtain opinions from physicians about clinical utility
- Understand actions taken by individuals based upon results
- Determine if there are changes in risk scores from baseline to a 2<sup>nd</sup> test
- 200 participants to be enrolled at Boulder Heart

*SomaLogic's first prospective study using an insight*

## The CVD Secondary Panel

- Test performed in the CLIA lab
- Measures 7 analytes
  - Growth and Remodeling: ANGPT2, GDF11/8, MMP-12
  - Inflammation: C7 and CCL18/PARC
  - Proteases: SERPINA3 and SERPINF2
- Test predicts the likelihood of a CVD event in the next 5 years
  - CVD event is defined as a heart attack, stroke, hospitalization for heart failure, or all-cause death

# CVD Secondary Risk Categories





**ABSTRACT** | Originally Published 18 May 2021 | 

 Check for updates

## Abstract P027: Individualized Protein Based Cardiovascular Risk Stratification: Impact On Patient And Physician Decision Making In Patients With Real World Cardiovascular Disease

Austin Erben, Sandra Housholder, Rosalynn Gill, Stephen A Williams, and Nelson P Trujillo | [AUTHOR INFO & AFFILIATIONS](#)

Circulation • Volume 143, Number Suppl\_1 • [https://doi.org/10.1161/circ.143.suppl\\_1.P027](https://doi.org/10.1161/circ.143.suppl_1.P027)



### Abstract

There is a growing population of patients with established cardiovascular disease and residual cardiovascular risk. Identification of patients who would benefit most from more advanced risk reduction strategies would be ideal.

**Hypothesis:** Identification of secondary risk of MACE may change both physician recommendations and patient choices regarding goal directed therapy (GDT).

**Methods:** Retrospective review of 244 patients with established CAD with traditional assessment of secondary cardiovascular risk and SomaScan proteomic risk assessment followed over 3 years. Patients were evaluated for GDT and standard measurements were made at baseline. SomaScan protein risk score was obtained. Patients received advice regarding risk and offered GDT with established secondary prevention goals. Willingness to change, physician recommendations to change therapy and therapy changes were recorded. Patients were followed over three years.



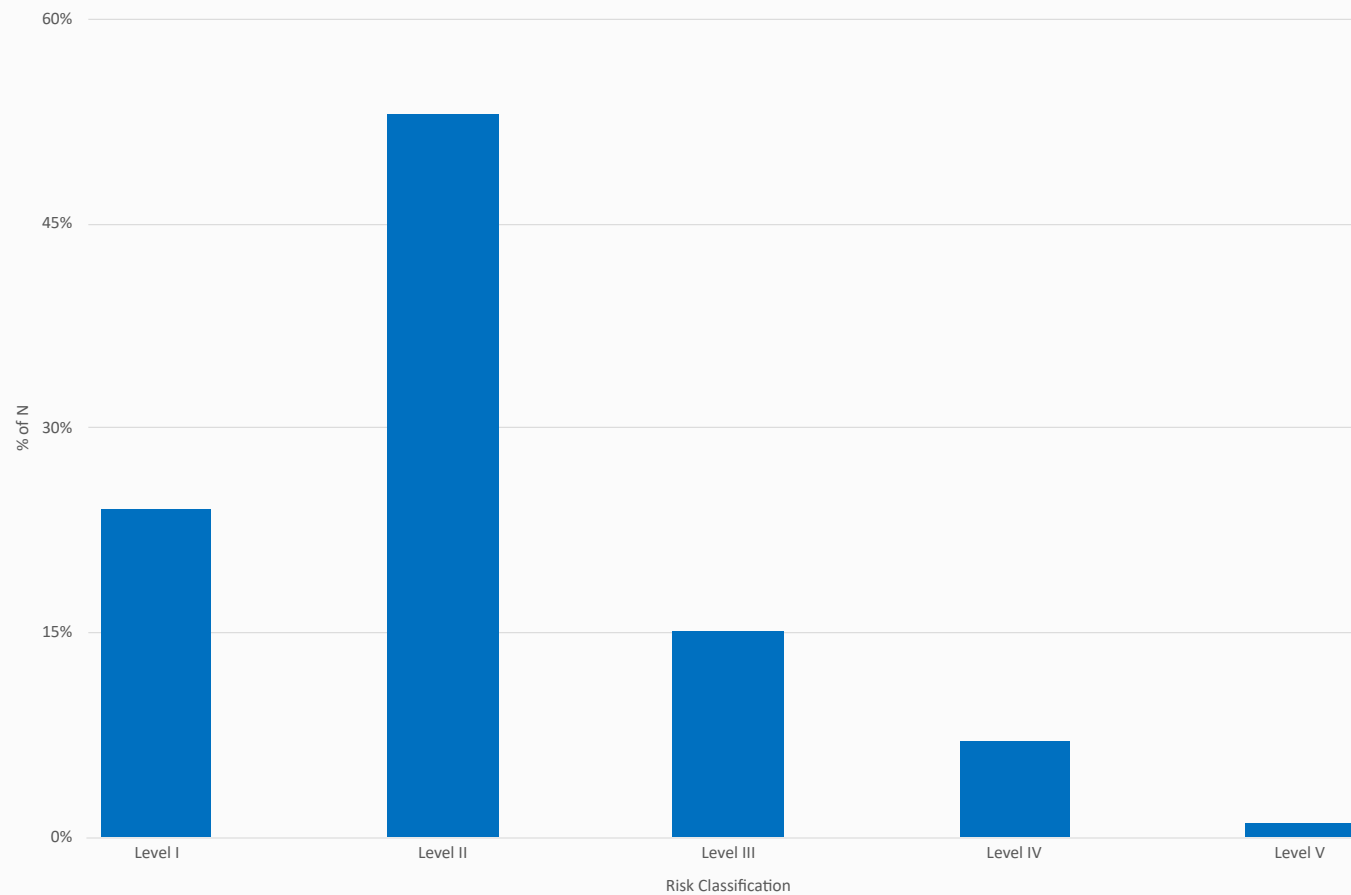
# Individualized Protein Based Cardiovascular Risk Stratification

- 244 Patients
  - Male 76% (186)
  - Female 24%(58)
- Mean age 66 (32-84)
- Diagnosis
  - 49%(121) Imaging
  - 51%(123) Clinical Events: CABG,MI,PCI

# Individualized Protein Based Cardiovascular Risk Stratification

- 58% (n=143) of patients were on guideline directed therapy (statin,asa,ace)
- 42% (n=101) of patients were sub-optimally managed.

## Risk Profile of Study Population (n=244)

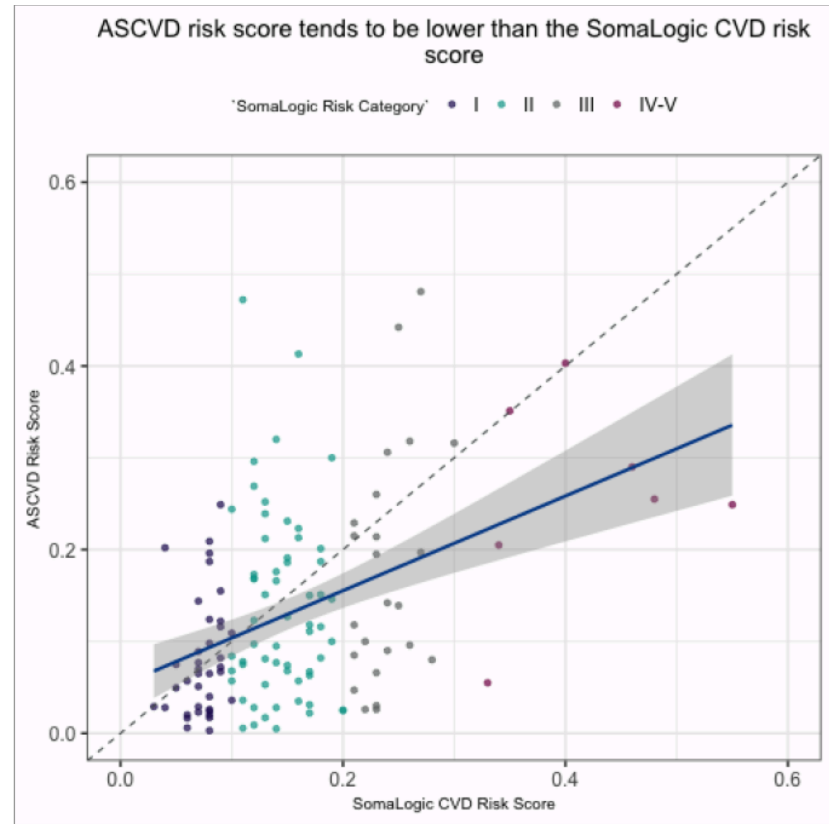


# Boulder Cohort 244 patients

Re-classification of patients.

Motivates patients to make changes.

Risk appropriate pharmacological therapy.



This figure plots the concordance between the ASCVD and SomaLogic CVD Risk scores. The dots are colored by SomaLogic Risk Category. The grey, dashed line represents perfect concordance between the two risk scores. The solid, blue line is the linear fit between the two and shows that the ASCVD calculation tends to produce a lower risk score than the SomaLogic algorithm, particularly at increasing levels of risk. The grey shading around the line represents the 95% confidence interval.

# Individualized Protein Based Cardiovascular Risk Stratification

Study results identified 111 (45%) patients where the clinician advised alteration in therapy; initiation of GDT in 20 patients and increase in GDT for 52 patients (65%).

The majority of patients offered more intensive therapy were in the higher study classifications. (PCSK-9 inhibitors, ACE, etc..)

These higher classifications were not associated and would not have been identified with traditional risk factors suggesting incremental benefit to the study results.

17 patients would not consider initiation of medical therapies

# Individualized Protein Based Cardiovascular Risk Stratification

- Use of Somascan results in conjunction with standard assessment allowed an additional 30% of patients to change therapy including starting GDY and or intensification of GDT.

# Clinical Utility

## Clinical utility of a novel test for assessing cardiovascular disease risk in type 2 diabetes: a randomized controlled trial

[John W. Peabody](#) , [David Paculdo](#), [Enrico de Belen](#), [Divya Ganesan](#), [Isabella Cooney](#) & [Nelson Trujillo](#)

*Diabetology & Metabolic Syndrome* **15**, Article number: 155 (2023) | [Cite this article](#)

1454 Accesses | 1 Citations | 1 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

### Abstract

#### Background

The risk for and treatment of cardiovascular disease (CVD) in type 2 diabetes (T2DM) is often incorrect and delayed. We wished to determine if a novel test improved physicians' ability to risk stratify, diagnose, and treat patients with T2DM.

#### Methods

In a 2-phase randomized controlled trial comparing the clinical workup, diagnosis, and management of online, simulated patients with T2DM in a nationwide sample of cardiologists and primary care physicians, participants were randomly assigned to control or one of two intervention groups. Intervention participants had access to standard of care diagnostic tools plus a novel diagnostic CVD risk stratification test.

#### Results

In control, there was no change in CV risk stratification of simulated patients between baseline and round 2 (37.1 to 38.3%,  $p = 0.778$ ). Pre-post analysis showed significant improvements in risk stratification in both Intervention 1 (38.7 to 65.3%) and Intervention 2 (41.9 to 65.8%) ( $p < 0.01$ ) compared to controls. Both intervention groups significantly increased prescribing SGLT2 inhibitors/GLP1 receptor agonists versus control, + 18.9% for Intervention 1 ( $p = 0.020$ ) and + 9.4% for Intervention 2 ( $p = 0.014$ ). Non-pharmacologic treatment improved significantly compared to control (+ 30.0% in Intervention 1 ( $p < 0.001$ ) and + 22.8% in Intervention 2 ( $p = 0.001$ ). Finally, monitoring HgbA1C, blood pressure, and follow-up visit frequency improved by + 20.3% ( $p = 0.004$ ) in Intervention 1 and + 20.8% ( $p < 0.001$ ) in



# Individualized Protein Based Cardiovascular Risk Stratification

Does this change outcomes?

## Lesson's

- 1 High risk is high risk.
2. Low risk can become high risk.
3. Low risk maybe high risk.
4. High risk maybe low risk.
5. Low risk is low risk.



High Risk is high risk.

#42

77 yo s/p CABG and PCI

LDL 107 mg/dl

Calculated risk: 29%

Measured Risk: 64%

VF with rescue

Add Zetia.



Low risk becomes high risk.

66 yo male known 70% stenosis of the LAD

LDL:60 mg/dl

Calculated risk:15%

Measured risk: 12%

Normal exercise test with normal myocardial perfusion.

Elective PCI . Complications. Emergency CABG leading to stroke and death.

Low risk is high risk.

60 yo with CAD

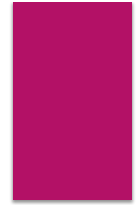
LDL:127 mg/dl

Calculated risk: 20%

Measured risk: 58%

More aggressive secondary prevention.





High risk is low risk.

61 yo s/p CABG for critical left main disease

LDL:149 mg/dl

Calculated risk: 47%

Measured risk: 11%

Re-assurance.

Continued aggressive secondary prevention.



Low Risk is low risk.

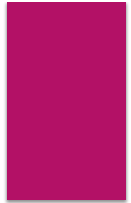
56 yo s/p CABG

Ldl: 69 mg/dl

Calculated risk: 2.9%































Measured risk: 3%

Re-assurance



# SomaLogic

## A proteomic surrogate for cardiovascular outcomes that is sensitive to multiple mechanisms of change in risk

STEPHEN A. WILLIAMS , RACHEL OSTROFF , MICHAEL A. HINTERBERG , JOSEF CORESH , CHRISTIE M. BALLANTYNE , KUNIHIRO MATSUSHITA , CHRISTIAN E. MUELLER ,  
JOAN WALTER , CHRISTIAN JONASSON , RURY R. HOLMAN , SVATI H. SHAH , NAVEED SATTAR , ROY TAYLOR , MICHAEL E. LEAN , SHINTARO KATO , HIROAKI SHIMOKAWA ,  
YASUHIKO SAKATA , KOTARO NOCHIOKA , CHIRAG R. PARIKH , STEVEN G. COCA , TORBJØRN OMLAND , JESSICA CHADWICK , DAVID ASTLING , YOLANDA HAGAR , NATASHA KURESHI ,  
KELSEY LOUPY , CLARE PATERSON , JEREMY PRIMUS , MISSY SIMPSON , NELSON P. TRUJILLO, AND PETER GANZ  fewer [Authors Info & Affiliations](#)

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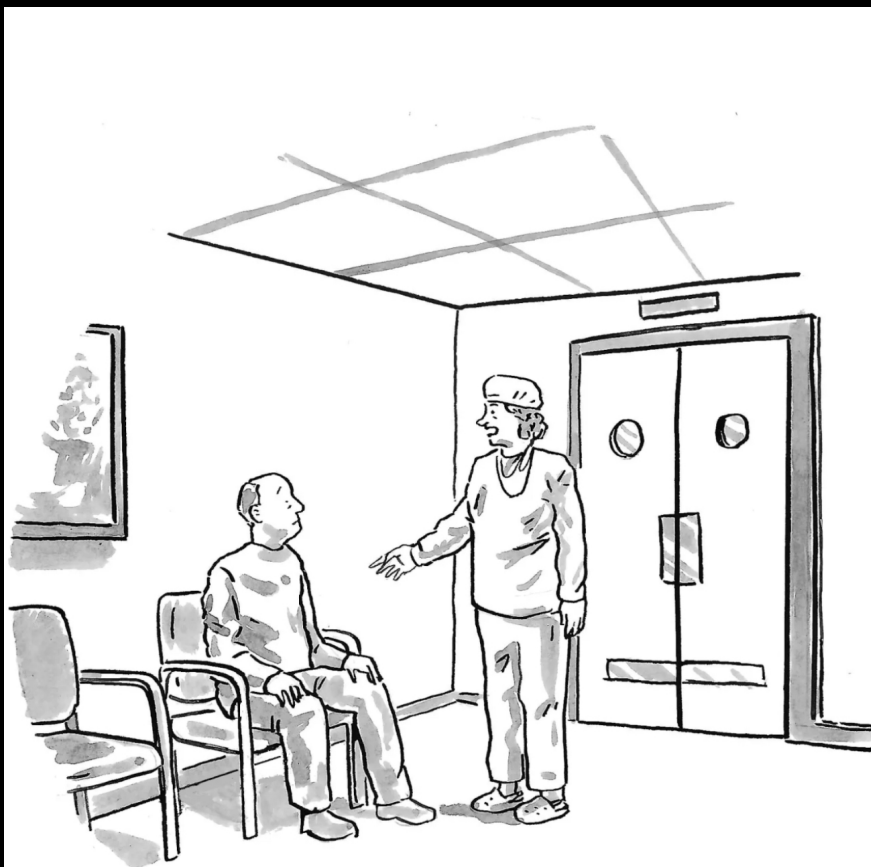
↓ 17,678 9



### Creating a surrogate for cardiovascular risk

Clinical trials can be limited by the lack of surrogates for cardiovascular risk, leading to increased costs and potentially delaying important results. Here, Williams *et al.* used proteomics and machine learning to derive a 27-protein model that could predict the 4-year likelihood of myocardial infarction, heart failure, stroke, or death better than a clinical model. The proteins included in the model represented 10 mechanistic pathways, and 12 were associated with causal genetic traits. This model was validated across more than 11,000 participants from multiple large studies and was sensitive to both adverse and beneficial changes in outcome, suggesting that it has potential as a surrogate end point for use in phase 2 trials.





B L O P E R

*"I'm sorry, we did everything we could before Elon cut our funding."*

Cartoon by Brendan Loper

# Future Work



Building the world's most comprehensive longitudinal repository of biological samples and sociological health data.

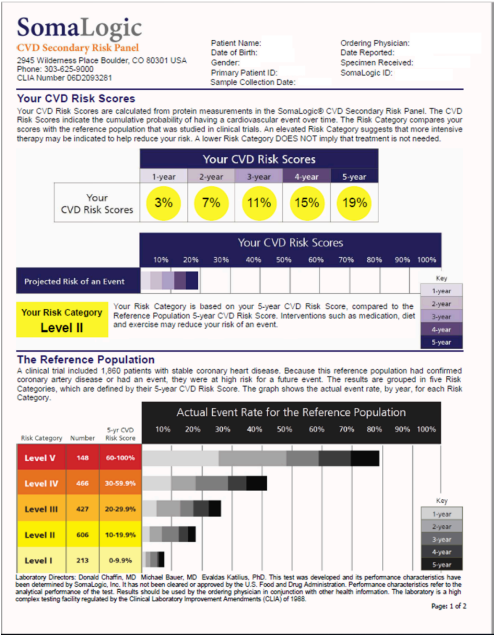
# SomaLogic

27 proteins

Thematic grouping of at least 10 different biological processes represented in the model:

- blood volume and natriuresis [NTproBNP, ANP],
- vesicle biogenesis [ARL11],
- matrix/tissue modeling, growth, angiogenesis or adhesion [ANTR2, CILP-2, CA125\*, GOLM1, spondin-1\*, SVEP1\*, PTRPJ, ITI heavy-chain 2\*, NELL1, GDF11/8\*],
- cellular immunity [MMP12\*, ERBB3, NCAM-120\*],
- calcium channel modulation [CA2D3\*],
- glomerular filtration rate [TFF3],
- immunoglobulins [IGDC4, JAM-B, sTREM1\*],
- metabolism & lipids [SIRT2, PPR1A, LRP11\*],
- inflammation [suPAR\*, NDST1]
- coagulation [ATS13\*].

1. J. Zheng et al., Phenome-wide Mendelian randomization mapping the influence of the plasma proteome on complex diseases. Nature genetics 52, 1122-1131 (2020).  
Biologic plausibility of 27 proteins





## The Laughing Heart

Your life is your life  
Don't let it be clubbed into dank submission.  
Be on the watch.  
There are ways out.  
There is a light somewhere.  
It may not be much light but  
It beats the darkness.  
Be on the watch.  
The gods will offer you chances.  
Know them.  
Take them.  
You can't beat death but  
You can beat death in life, sometimes.  
And the more often you learn to do it,  
The more light there will be.  
Your life is your life.  
Know it while you have it.  
You are marvelous  
The gods wait to delight  
In you.