Mediterranean and low fat diets are associated with similar lipid levels at 1 year in patients with coronary heart disease on statin therapy

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Background: A low fat (LF) diet is usually recommended for patients with coronary heart disease (CHD). A high fat Mediterranean (Med) diet, rich in monounsaturates (MUFA) is associated with low CHD. Relative efficacy of diets for patients on statins is unknown. This study compared LF to Med diets on lipids and lipoproteins in patients with CHD on standard therapy (including statins).

Method: 68 patients with angiographic CHD were randomised to LF (fat 20–25% energy (E), saturated fat (SFA) 8–10% E0 or Med (fat 35–40% E, >50% MUFA). Lipids were measured prior to drug therapy, at randomisation and 3 and 12 months.

Results: 86% LF patients and 80% Med patients were on statins. Similarly, 80% LF and 85% Med patients were taking aspirin. Mean fat intake in LF diet was 20% of total E (SFA 8.5% of total E) compared to Med diet with fat 34% of total E (57% MUFA).

	Chol	Trig	HDL-C	LDL-C
Pre statin	6.59	2.81	1.18	3.92
LF 12 Months	4.42	1.56	1.21	2.52
Med 12 Months	4.52	1.48	1.24	2.62

Conclusion: Med and LF diets are associated with similar lipid and lipoprotein levels at 1 year in patients with CHD on standard therapy. Dietary recommendations for CHD patients ought to consider a Med style diet in addition to a LF diet.

Key words: Mediterranean, lipid, CHD