ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Factors Associated With PCSK9 Inhibitor Initiation Among US Veterans

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BACKGROUND: Few adults at high risk for atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease events use a PCSK9i (proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9 inhibitor).

METHODS AND RESULTS: Using data from the US Veterans Health Administration, we identified veterans who initiated a PCSK9i between January 2018 and December 2019, matched 1:4 to veterans who did not initiate this medication over this time period (case-cohort study). Two cohorts of veterans were analyzed: (1) atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, with a most recent low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) ≥70 mg/dL; and (2) severe hypercholesterolemia (ie, familial hypercholesterolemia or any prior LDL-C ≥190 mg/dL, with most recent LDL-C ≥100 mg/dL). Conditional logistic regression was used to analyze factors associated with PCSK9i initiation, adjusting for all factors, simultaneously. There were 2394 initiators and 9576 noninitiators in the atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease cohort (median LDL-C, 141 and 96 mg/dL, respectively; P < 0.001). Factors associated with a higher likelihood of PCSK9i initiation included age 65 to <75 versus <65 years, highest versus lowest quartile of median area-level income, familial hypercholesterolemia, former statin use, and current ezetimibe use. PCSK9i initiation was lower among veterans of a race/ethnicity other than non-Hispanic White. There were 245 initiators and 980 noninitiators in the severe hypercholesterolemia cohort (median LDL-C, 183 and 151 mg/dL, respectively; P < 0.001). Age ≥75 versus <65 years, history of chronic kidney disease, former statin use, and current ezetimibe use were associated with a higher likelihood of PCSK9i initiation.

CONCLUSIONS: Several patient-level factors, including age, sex, and race/ethnicity, were significantly associated with PCSK9i initiation, suggesting an unmet treatment need in several patient groups.

Key Words: antihypercholesteremic agents ■ cardiovascular disease ■ coronary disease ■ dyslipidemias ■ lipid-lowering therapy ■ PCSK9 ■ veterans

The PCSK9i (proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9 inhibitors) alirocumab and evolocumab lower low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) levels by up to 60% and reduce cardiovascular events among patients with atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) taking statins.1-3 The 2018 American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology multisociety blood cholesterol guideline recommends ezetimibe or PCSK9i for adults with ASCVD who have a treated LDL-C above the threshold of 70 mg/dL and are at high risk for recurrent events or those with familial hypercholesterolemia (FH) who are above the LDL-C threshold of 100 mg/dL despite maximally tolerated statin therapy.4

Prior studies using electronic health record and commercial insurance claims data found low proportions of patients initiating PCSK9i.5-10 These reports of low PCSK9i initiation represent data from multiple

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Supplementary Material for this article is available at https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/suppl/10.1161/JAHA.120.019254

For Sources of Funding and Disclosures, see page 10.

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JAHA is available at: www.ahajournals.org/journal/jaha

J Am Heart Assoc. 2021;10:e019254. DOI: 10.1161/JAHA.120.019254
nonintegrated healthcare delivery systems with a range of care delivery models, cost of PCSK9i therapy, and access to care. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is the largest integrated healthcare delivery system in the United States and mediates medication cost and access barriers by structuring copays according to an 8-group priority system based on military service history and level of disability and income, among other factors. Veterans in priority group 1 have a $0 copay for all medications, and veterans in groups 2 through 8 have a flat $33 tier 3 monthly copay for PCSK9i therapy. The current appropriate use criteria at the VHA guide the initiation of PCSK9i among patients with high ASCVD risk or with FH who are taking a maximally tolerated statin and ezetimibe therapy. Evaluating PCSK9i initiation within an integrated healthcare delivery system, such as the VHA, may allow for the identification of patient factors associated with PCSK9i initiation independently of cost, which would provide opportunities to improve LDL-C control and reduce ASCVD events.

The goals of the current study were to (1) characterize LDL-C levels among veterans who did and did not initiate a PCSK9i and (2) determine characteristics associated with PCSK9i initiation in 2018 and 2019 among 2 high-risk cohorts: veterans with ASCVD and LDL-C ≥70 mg/dL, the ASCVD cohort; and veterans without ASCVD but with primary severe hypercholesterolemia and LDL-C ≥100 mg/dL, the severe hypercholesterolemia cohort.

**METHODS**

*Design, Setting, and Data Sources*

This retrospective matched case-control study used clinical, pharmacy, and administrative data from >140 VHA hospitals and 1200 VHA outpatient clinics. We obtained demographic, clinical, healthcare use, and pharmacy data from the Corporate Data Warehouse. The University of Utah Institutional Review Board and the Salt Lake City Veterans Affairs Health Care System Research and Development Office approved this study with a waiver of informed consent. Data used in this study are available from the VHA on request through VHA data access procedures.

*Study Population*

We identified all veterans whose first ever fill for a PCSK9i was between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2019 (ie, veterans with a fill for a PCSK9i before January 1, 2018, were not included). For each veteran who initiated a PCSK9i between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2019, the date of his/her earliest PCSK9i fill defined the index date. We then selected PCSK9i initiators who meet all of the following eligibility criteria: (1) had continuous enrollment, defined by having at least 1 outpatient or inpatient encounter in the first and last 6 months of the 1-year period before their index date (the "preindex period"); and (2) were alive on their index date and without multiple death dates recorded in the database. Among PCSK9i initiators who met the eligibility criteria above, we selected 2 mutually exclusive cohorts based on the following criteria:

1. Veterans with ASCVD whose most recent preindex LDL-C before their index date was ≥70 mg/dL (the ASCVD cohort).
2. Veterans without ASCVD who had primary severe hypercholesterolemia, defined by either a diagnosis of FH or an LDL-C ≥190 mg/dL at any point in the past, and whose most recent preindex LDL-C before their index date was ≥100 mg/dL (the severe hypercholesterolemia cohort).
Table 1. Characteristics of Initiators and Noninitiators of a PCSK9i in the VHA With ASCVD and a Preindex LDL-C ≥70 mg/dL

| Characteristic                              | Initiators (n=2394) | Noninitiators (n=9576) | P Value |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------|
| Index date calendar year 2019               | 1544 (64.5)         | 6176 (64.5)            | 1.000   |
| Age, mean (SD), y                           | 68.1 (8.6)          | 70.5 (11.8)            | <0.001  |
| Age category, y                             |                     |                        |         |
| <65                                         | 631 (26.4)          | 2454 (25.6)            | <0.001  |
| 65–<75                                      | 1321 (55.2)         | 4034 (42.1)            |         |
| ≥75                                         | 442 (18.5)          | 3088 (32.2)            |         |
| Women                                       | 115 (4.8)           | 480 (5.0)              | 0.67    |
| Race/ethnicity                              |                     |                        |         |
| Non-Hispanic, White                         | 1975 (84.8)         | 6782 (73.9)            | <0.001  |
| Non-Hispanic, Black                         | 248 (10.7)          | 1631 (17.8)            |         |
| Asian                                       | 3 (0.1)             | 51 (0.6)               |         |
| Hispanic                                    | 73 (3.1)            | 533 (5.8)              |         |
| Other*                                      | 29 (1.2)            | 176 (1.9)              |         |
| Median area-level income                    |                     |                        |         |
| Quartile 1 ($0–$41 757)                     | 531 (22.2)          | 2461 (25.7)            | <0.001  |
| Quartile 2 ($41 758–$51 357)               | 563 (23.5)          | 2430 (25.4)            |         |
| Quartile 3 ($51 363–$64 870)               | 645 (26.9)          | 2348 (24.5)            |         |
| Quartile 4 ($64 878–$212 394)              | 655 (27.4)          | 2337 (24.4)            |         |
| Supplemental health insurance               | 2001 (83.7)         | 7921 (83.0)            | 0.44    |
| Priority group                              |                     |                        |         |
| 1                                           | 1159 (48.5)         | 3643 (38.2)            | <0.001  |
| 2–8                                         | 1229 (51.5)         | 5902 (61.8)            |         |
| VISN region                                 |                     |                        |         |
| Northeast                                   | 692 (28.9)          | 2607 (27.2)            | <0.001  |
| Southeast                                   | 1010 (42.2)         | 3691 (38.5)            |         |
| Continental                                 | 462 (19.3)          | 1845 (19.3)            |         |
| Pacific                                     | 230 (9.6)           | 1433 (15.0)            |         |
| Current smoking                             | 429 (17.9)          | 1552 (16.2)            | 0.04    |
| Comorbidities                               |                     |                        |         |
| Diabetes mellitus                           | 1220 (51.0)         | 4019 (42.0)            | <0.001  |
| Hypertension                                | 2179 (91.0)         | 8080 (84.4)            | <0.001  |
| Chronic kidney disease                      | 1050 (43.9)         | 3833 (40.0)            | <0.001  |
| Heart failure                               | 535 (22.3)          | 1377 (14.4)            | <0.001  |
| Familial hypercholesterolemia               | 181 (7.6)           | 27 (0.3)               | <0.001  |
| History of CHD                              | 2314 (96.7)         | 8204 (85.7)            | <0.001  |
| Prior coronary revascularization            | 835 (34.9)          | 2054 (21.4)            | <0.001  |
| Cerebrovascular disease                     | 344 (14.4)          | 1430 (14.9)            | 0.49    |
| Peripheral artery disease                   | 441 (18.4)          | 1676 (17.5)            | 0.29    |
| Statin use                                  |                     |                        |         |
| Never                                       | 131 (5.5)           | 1720 (18.0)            | <0.001  |
| Former                                      | 1436 (60.0)         | 3509 (36.6)            |         |
| Current: low intensity                      | 94 (3.9)            | 325 (3.4)              |         |
| Current: moderate to high intensity         | 733 (30.6)          | 4022 (42.0)            |         |
| Ezetimibe use                               |                     |                        |         |
| Never or former                             | 1380 (57.6)         | 9472 (98.9)            | <0.001  |
| Current                                     | 1014 (42.4)         | 104 (1.1)              |         |
| LDL-C, median (IQR), mg/dL                  | 141.0 (116.0–169.0) | 96.0 (82.0–119.0)      | <0.001  |
ASCVD was defined as a history of coronary heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, or peripheral artery disease before each veteran's index date (Table S1).13–15 PCSK9i initiators who did not meet the criteria for the ASCVD or severe hypercholesterolemia cohorts were excluded from the analysis.

We identified all veterans who did not fill a PCSK9i at any point on or before December 31, 2019 (ie, noninitiators) to serve as controls. For each PCSK9i initiator included in the analysis, we randomly selected without replacement 4 noninitiators who meet the same eligibility criteria and cohort criteria using as the noninitiator's index date a random date in the same calendar quarter of his/her matched initiator’s index date. In other words, initiators and noninitiators were matched on the calendar quarter of their index date and on their cohort criteria (ie, ASCVD or severe hypercholesterolemia cohort).

Veteran Characteristics and Comorbidities

Veteran characteristics were identified using data from the 1-year preindex period. Comorbidities and medication use were identified using all available data before the index date. Codes and algorithms used to identify patient characteristics, comorbidities, medication use, ASCVD events, and laboratory values are provided in Tables S1 and S2. As the use of PCSK9i may vary by region, Veterans Integrated Service Networks were categorized into 4 regions: Northeast, Southeast, Continental, and Pacific (Data S1). We also identified veterans with supplemental insurance coverage beyond their VHA benefits (eg, Medicare supplemental or Medicaid insurance). These patient- and facility-level factors were selected a priori on the basis of prior studies.16–18 We used all prescription fills at VHA pharmacies before the index date to identify veterans who never used a statin, were former statin users, or were current users of a low-intensity or moderate- to high-intensity statin. We used all prescription fills at VHA pharmacies before the index date to identify veterans who were never or former ezetimibe users or current ezetimibe users. The most recent preindex LDL-C in the 1 year before the index date was identified for each veteran and categorized as 70 to <100, 100 to <130, 130 to <190, and ≥190 mg/dL. Veterans with a history of multiple major ASCVD events or one major ASCVD event and multiple high-risk conditions were categorized as having high risk for future ASCVD events, as outlined in the 2018 American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology multisociety blood cholesterol guideline (Data S1).4

Statistical Analysis

All analyses were conducted for the ASCVD cohort and severe hypercholesterolemia cohort, separately. Veterans’ characteristics and the distribution of LDL-C levels were calculated among PCSK9i initiators and noninitiators, separately. We used conditional logistic regression to calculate odds ratios and 95% CIs for initiating a PCSK9i associated with each characteristic, comorbidity, statin and ezetimibe use, and preindex LDL-C category. We conducted 3 nested models. Model 1 was unadjusted. Model 2 was adjusted for age, sex, and race-ethnicity. Model 3 included the variables in model 2 with additional adjustment for median area-level income.
Table 2. Odds Ratios for Initiating a PCSK9i Associated With Patient Characteristics Among Veterans in the ASCVD Cohort

| Characteristics                      | Odds Ratio (95% CI) | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Age category, y                      |                     |         |         |         |
| <65                                  | 1 (Reference)       |         |         |         |
| 65–75                                | 1.28 (1.15–1.43)    |         |         |         |
| ≥75                                  | 0.56 (0.49–0.64)    |         |         |         |
| Women                                | 0.96 (0.78–1.18)    |         |         |         |
| Race/ethnicity                       |                     |         |         |         |
| Non-Hispanic, White                 | 1 (Reference)       |         |         |         |
| Non-Hispanic, Black                 | 0.52 (0.45–0.60)    |         |         |         |
| Asian                                | 0.21 (0.06–0.66)    |         |         |         |
| Hispanic                             | 0.47 (0.38–0.60)    |         |         |         |
| Other*                               | 0.57 (0.38–0.85)    |         |         |         |
| Median area-level income             |                     |         |         |         |
| Quartile 1 ($0–$41,757)             | 1 (Reference)       |         |         |         |
| Quartile 2 ($41,758–$51,357)        | 1.07 (0.94–1.22)    |         |         |         |
| Quartile 3 ($51,363–$64,870)        | 1.27 (1.12–1.44)    |         |         |         |
| Quartile 4 ($64,878–$212,394)       | 1.30 (1.14–1.47)    |         |         |         |
| Supplemental health insurance        |                     |         |         |         |
| No                                   | 1 (Reference)       |         |         |         |
| Yes                                  | 1.05 (0.93–1.18)    |         |         |         |
| Priority group                       |                     |         |         |         |
| 1                                    | 1 (Reference)       |         |         |         |
| 2–8                                  | 0.65 (0.59–0.71)    |         |         |         |
| VISN region                          |                     |         |         |         |
| Northeast                            | 1 (Reference)       |         |         |         |
| Southeast                            | 1.03 (0.93–1.15)    |         |         |         |
| Continental                          | 0.94 (0.82–1.07)    |         |         |         |
| Pacific                              | 0.60 (0.51–0.71)    |         |         |         |
| Smoking status                       |                     |         |         |         |
| Never/former                         | 1 (Reference)       |         |         |         |
| Current                              | 1.13 (1.00–1.27)    |         |         |         |
| Comorbidities                        |                     |         |         |         |
| Diabetes mellitus                    | 1.43 (1.31–1.57)    |         |         |         |
| Hypertension                         | 1.89 (1.62–2.20)    |         |         |         |
| Chronic kidney disease               | 1.17 (1.07–1.28)    |         |         |         |
| Heart failure                        | 1.72 (1.53–1.92)    |         |         |         |
| Familial hypercholesterolemia        | 27.75 (18.40–41.87) |         |         |         |
| History of CHD                       | 4.78 (3.80–6.01)    |         |         |         |
| Prior coronary revascularization     | 1.97 (1.78–2.17)    |         |         |         |
| Cerebrovascular disease              | 0.96 (0.84–1.09)    |         |         |         |
| Peripheral artery disease            | 1.06 (0.95–1.19)    |         |         |         |
| Statin use                           |                     |         |         |         |
| Never                                | 1 (Reference)       |         |         |         |
| Former                               | 5.35 (4.42–6.46)    |         |         |         |
| Current: low intensity               | 3.86 (2.88–5.18)    |         |         |         |
| Current: moderate to high intensity  | 2.39 (1.97–2.91)    |         |         |         |

(Continued)
Table 2. Continued

| Characteristics | Odds Ratio (95% CI) |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Use of ezetimibe |                     |
| Never or former | 1 (Reference)       |
| Current         | 76.98 (58.10–102.00) |
| LDL-C category, mg/dL |              |
| 70–<100         | 1 (Reference)       |
| 100–<130        | 3.97 (3.41–4.61)    |
| 130–<190        | 13.25 (11.43–15.35) |
| ≥190            | 46.67 (35.98–60.55) |
| Model 1: unadjusted. Model 2: adjusted for age, sex, and race/ethnicity. Model 3: adjusted for all the variables listed in the left-hand column of the table. There were 469 (3.9%) veterans in the ASCVD cohort with missing data on race. ASCVD indicates atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease; CHD, coronary heart disease; LDL-C, low-density lipoprotein cholesterol; PCSK9i, proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9 inhibitor; and VISN, Veterans Integrated Service Network.

*Other indicates American Indian or Alaska Native, Mixed, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or missing ethnicity.

RESULTS

ASCVD Cohort

Characteristics and Preindex LDL-C Levels

There were 2394 PCSK9i initiators and 9576 matched noninitiators included in the ASCVD cohort (Figure S1). Those who initiated a PCSK9i were younger than noninitiators (mean age, 68.1 versus 70.5 years; P<0.001), and 4.8% of initiators and 5.0% of noninitiators were women (Table 1). The median most recent preindex LDL-C was higher in initiators versus noninitiators (141.0 versus 98.0 mg/dL; Figure 1). The proportion currently taking a moderate- to high-intensity statin was 30.6% and 42.0% among initiators and noninitiators, respectively.

Characteristics Associated With Initiation

In fully adjusted models, veterans aged ≥75 versus <65 years, women, and non-Hispanic Black, Asian, and Hispanic versus non-Hispanic White veterans were less likely to initiate PCSK9i (Table 2). Veterans in priority groups 2 through 8 were less likely to initiate PCSK9i compared with veterans in priority group 1. Veterans receiving care in the Pacific Veterans Integrated Service Network region were less likely to initiate PCSK9i compared with veterans in the Northeast region. Veterans in the highest compared with lowest quartile of median area-level income were more likely to initiate a PCSK9i. Veterans with diabetes mellitus, hypertension, heart failure, FH, history of coronary heart disease, prior coronary revascularization, and cerebrovascular disease were more likely to initiate a PCSK9i compared with their counterparts without these conditions. Compared with veterans who had never taken a statin, former and current low-intensity statin use was associated with a higher likelihood of PCSK9i initiation. Current ezetimibe users were more likely to initiate a PCSK9i compared with never/former users. The likelihood of PCKS9i initiation increased at progressively higher LDL-C levels. Veteran’s characteristics, preindex LDL-C levels, and factors associated with PCSK9i initiation in subgroup analyses in the ASCVD cohort are shown in Tables S3 and S4 and Figure S2.

Severe Hypercholesterolemia Cohort

Characteristics and Preindex LDL-C Levels

There were 245 PCSK9i initiators and 980 matched noninitiators in the severe hypercholesterolemia cohort (Figure S1). PCSK9i initiators were older than noninitiators (mean age, 60.7 versus 58.4 years), and 20.0% of initiators and 13.9% of noninitiators were women (Table 3). The median most recent preindex LDL-C was higher in initiators versus noninitiators (183.3 versus 150.9 mg/dL; Figure 2). The proportion currently taking a moderate- to high-intensity statin...
Table 3. Characteristics of Initiators and Noninitiators of a PCSK9i in the VHA With Severe Hypercholesterolemia and a Preindex LDL-C ≥100 mg/dL

| Characteristic                        | Initiators (n=245) | Noninitiators (n=980) | P Value |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Index date calendar year 2019        | 155 (63.3)        | 620 (63.3)            | 1.000   |
| Age, mean (SD), y                    | 60.7 (12.3)       | 58.4 (13.0)           | 0.010   |
| Age category, y                      |                   |                       |         |
| <65                                  | 128 (52.2)        | 625 (63.8)            | 0.004   |
| 65–<75                               | 92 (37.6)         | 279 (28.5)            |         |
| ≥75                                  | 25 (10.2)         | 76 (7.8)              |         |
| Women                                | 49 (20.0)         | 136 (13.9)            | 0.017   |
| Race/ethnicity                       |                   |                       |         |
| Non-Hispanic, White                  | 156 (67.5)        | 629 (67.6)            | 0.06    |
| Non-Hispanic, Black                  | 58 (25.1)         | 169 (20.3)            |         |
| Asian                                | 1 (0.4)           | 14 (1.5)              |         |
| Hispanic                             | 11 (4.8)          | 87 (9.4)              |         |
| Other*                               | 5 (2.2)           | 11 (1.2)              |         |
| Median area-level income             |                   |                       |         |
| Quartile 1 ($0–$43 173)              | 62 (25.3)         | 244 (24.9)            | 0.112   |
| Quartile 2 ($43 264–$51 738)        | 47 (19.2)         | 259 (26.4)            |         |
| Quartile 3 ($51 740–$66 333)        | 69 (28.2)         | 238 (24.3)            |         |
| Quartile 4 ($66 359–$74 205)        | 67 (27.3)         | 239 (24.4)            |         |
| Supplemental health insurance        | 156 (63.9)        | 562 (57.5)            | 0.07    |
| Priority group                       |                   |                       |         |
| 1                                    | 125 (51.2)        | 445 (45.5)            | 0.11    |
| 2–8                                  | 119 (48.8)        | 534 (54.5)            |         |
| VISN region                          |                   |                       |         |
| Northeast                            | 63 (25.7)         | 209 (21.3)            | 0.001   |
| Southeast                            | 120 (49.0)        | 394 (40.2)            |         |
| Continental                          | 38 (15.5)         | 206 (21.0)            |         |
| Pacific                              | 24 (9.8)          | 171 (17.4)            |         |
| Current smoking                      | 31 (12.7)         | 139 (14.2)            | 0.54    |
| Comorbidities                        |                   |                       |         |
| Diabetes mellitus                    | 96 (39.2)         | 219 (22.3)            | <0.001  |
| Hypertension                         | 164 (66.9)        | 553 (56.4)            | 0.003   |
| Chronic kidney disease               | 72 (29.4)         | 199 (20.3)            | 0.002   |
| Heart failure                        | 5 (2.0)           | 8 (0.8)               | 0.09    |
| Familial hypercholesterolemia        | 65 (26.5)         | 11 (1.1)              | <0.001  |
| Statin use                           |                   |                       |         |
| Never                                | 18 (7.3)          | 194 (19.8)            | <0.001  |
| Former                               | 156 (63.7)        | 457 (46.6)            |         |
| Current: low intensity               | 11 (4.5)          | 18 (1.8)              |         |
| Current: moderate to high intensity  | 60 (24.5)         | 311 (31.7)            |         |
| Ezetimibe use                        |                   |                       |         |
| Never or former                      | 153 (62.4)        | 972 (99.2)            | <0.001  |
| Current                              | 92 (37.6)         | 8 (0.8)               |         |
| LDL-C, median (IQR), mg/dL           | 183.3 (159.0–205.0) | 150.9 (124.4–178.6) | <0.001  |

Numbers are expressed as number (percentage) unless otherwise indicated. The were 64 (5.2%) veterans with missing race. Primary severe hypercholesterolemia is defined as (1) familial hypercholesterolemia or (2) ever LDL-C ≥190 mg/dL. No veterans in the severe hypercholesterolemia cohort had a most recent LDL-C <100 mg/dL, as having an LDL-C ≥100 mg/dL was an inclusion criterion for this cohort. IQR indicates interquartile range; LDL-C, low-density lipoprotein cholesterol; PCSK9i, proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9 inhibitor; VHA, Veterans Health Administration; and VISN, Veterans Integrated Service Network.

*Other indicates American Indian or Alaska Native, Mixed, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or missing ethnicity.
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Figure 2. Distribution of the most recent low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) levels in the 1-year preindex period among PCSK9i (proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9 inhibitor) initiators and noninitiators among veterans in the severe hypercholesterolemia cohort, overall. We used LDL-C measurements within 365 days before each veteran’s index date, inclusive. For veterans with multiple LDL-C measurements during this time period, we used the one closest to their index date (ie, the most recent).

Characteristics Associated With Initiation

In fully adjusted models, veterans aged ≥75 versus <65 years and those of female sex were more likely to initiate PCSK9i (Table 4). Veterans with chronic kidney disease and FH were associated with a higher likelihood of PCSK9i initiation. Former statin use was associated with an increased likelihood of PCSK9i initiation compared with never statin use. Current ezetimibe use was associated with an increased likelihood of PCSK9i initiation compared with never/former ezetimibe use. The likelihood of PCSK9i initiation increased among veterans with progressively higher LDL-C. Veteran’s characteristics, preindex LDL-C levels, and factors associated with PCSK9i initiation in subgroup analyses in the severe hypercholesterolemia cohort are shown in Tables S5 and S6 and Figure S3, respectively.

DISCUSSION

In the current study of veterans with ASCVD or severe hypercholesterolemia receiving care at the VHA in 2018 and 2019, several factors were associated with PCSK9i initiation, including age, sex, race/ethnicity, median area-level income, statin and ezetimibe use, comorbidities, and region. Among veterans with ASCVD, female sex and those of Black race, Hispanic ethnicity, and Asian race were significantly less likely than White veterans to initiate a PCSK9i. Preindex LDL-C levels were substantially higher among those who initiated versus did not initiate a PCSK9i in both cohorts. Only 31% of veterans with ASCVD who initiated a PCSK9i were currently taking a moderate- or high-intensity statin. Among veterans without ASCVD but with primary severe hypercholesterolemia, female sex, chronic kidney disease, current ezetimibe use, and former statin use were associated with a higher likelihood of PCSK9i initiation in the fully adjusted model. The current study supports the implementation of interventions to optimize lipid-lowering therapy among high-risk and very-high-risk patients overall and in several populations, including age, sex, and race subgroups.

In the current analysis, there were differences in PCSK9i initiation by race among veterans with ASCVD. Black, Asian, and Hispanic veterans were each significantly less likely to initiate a PCSK9i compared with White veterans. This finding is consistent with prior studies reporting differences in the use of statin, antihypertensive, antiplatelet, and anticoagulant medication classes by race-ethnicity.19–23 One study of commercial and government prescription claims data found that paid PCSK9i prescription claims versus rejected claims were more common among White patients compared with patients of non-White races-ethnicities.5 Other studies show that Black veterans were less likely to receive lipid-lowering medications and achieve target LDL-C measures compared with White veterans.24,25 Interventions to increase the appropriate use of lipid-lowering therapy among minorities are needed.

Medication cost, both to the health system and patient, can be a factor in the decision to initiate PCSK9i in indicated patients. For example, in a recent qualitative study of community-dwelling patients prescribed a PCSK9i, patient out-of-pocket cost was the leading reported reason for PCSK9i discontinuation.26 In the ASCVD cohort in the current analysis, those in priority groups 2 to 8, where the copay is $33 for a PCSK9i, were less likely to initiate a PCSK9i compared with those in priority group 1, who have no copay for prescription medications. In addition, in the ASCVD cohort, higher median area-level income was associated with an increased likelihood of initiating a PCSK9i. The current analysis suggests that a patient’s area-level income and a relatively small increase in copay may be associated with the likelihood of PCSK9i initiation.

Current national guidelines recommend using statins at maximally tolerated doses, then adding PCSK9i therapy with or without ezetimibe.4 In the current analysis, only 31% and 25% of veterans in the ASCVD and severe hypercholesterolemia cohorts, respectively, who initiated a PCSK9i were taking a moderate- to high-intensity statin. These data are similar to prior reports showing that 30% to 40% of patients with an insurance-approved PCSK9i prescription claim were taking a statin,5,7,27,28 suggesting that PCSK9i use may be prioritized among patients unable or unwilling to use moderate- or high-intensity statins. Furthermore, in the

J Am Heart Assoc. 2021;10:e019254. DOI: 10.1161/JAHA.120.019254
Table 4. Odds Ratios for Initiating a PCSK9i Associated With Patient Characteristics Among Veterans in the Severe Hypercholesterolemia Cohort

| Characteristics                  | Odds Ratio (95% CI)       |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
|                                 | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
| **Age category, y**             |                  |                  |          |
| <65                             | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) |
| 65–<75                          | 1.62 (1.19–2.20) | 1.70 (1.24–2.33) | 1.50 (0.81–2.77) |
| ≥75                             | 1.63 (1.05–2.68) | 1.80 (1.09–2.98) | 2.76 (1.03–7.43) |
| Women                           | 1.59 (1.10–2.31) | 1.66 (1.13–2.45) | 1.99 (1.03–3.87) |
| **Race/ethnicity**              |                  |                  |          |
| Non-Hispanic, White             | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) |
| Non-Hispanic, Black             | 1.22 (0.86–1.72) | 1.28 (0.91–1.82) | 0.84 (0.45–1.57) |
| Asian                           | 0.28 (0.04–2.17) | 0.35 (0.04–2.72) | 0.26 (0.01–6.13) |
| Hispanic                        | 0.50 (0.26–0.97) | 0.59 (0.30–1.15) | 0.44 (0.14–1.39) |
| Other*                          | 1.86 (0.63–5.52) | 1.89 (0.63–5.67) | 0.86 (0.09–8.01) |
| **Median area-level income**    |                  |                  |          |
| Quartile 1 ($0–$43 173)         | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) |
| Quartile 2 ($43 264–$51 738)    | 0.72 (0.47–1.09) | 0.69 (0.45–1.06) | 0.45 (0.20–1.00) |
| Quartile 3 ($51 740–$66 333)    | 1.14 (0.78–1.69) | 1.15 (0.77–1.71) | 1.14 (0.55–2.35) |
| Quartile 4 ($66 359–$174 205)   | 1.10 (0.74–1.63) | 1.13 (0.75–1.70) | 0.89 (0.42–1.89) |
| **Supplemental health insurance**|          |                  |          |
| No                              | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) |
| Yes                             | 1.32 (0.98–1.77) | 1.05 (0.75–1.46) | 0.90 (0.52–1.58) |
| **Priority group**              |                  |                  |          |
| 1                               | 0.79 (0.60–1.05) | 0.68 (0.51–0.92) | 0.88 (0.51–1.52) |
| 2–8                             | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) |
| **VISN region**                 |                  |                  |          |
| Northeast                       | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) |
| Southeast                       | 1.01 (0.71–1.44) | 1.03 (0.71–1.48) | 0.81 (0.42–1.58) |
| Continental                     | 0.62 (0.40–0.97) | 0.65 (0.41–1.01) | 0.59 (0.27–1.30) |
| Pacific                         | 0.46 (0.27–0.77) | 0.45 (0.27–0.77) | 0.51 (0.22–1.15) |
| **Smoking status**              |                  |                  |          |
| Never/former                    | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) |
| Current                         | 0.87 (0.57–1.33) | 0.95 (0.61–1.46) | 0.94 (0.44–2.02) |
| **Comorbidities**               |                  |                  |          |
| Diabetes mellitus               | 2.18 (1.62–2.92) | 2.06 (1.52–2.80) | 1.55 (0.89–2.71) |
| Hypertension                    | 1.57 (1.17–2.12) | 1.41 (1.03–1.82) | 1.19 (0.68–2.08) |
| Chronic kidney disease          | 1.61 (1.18–2.19) | 1.45 (1.05–2.00) | 1.97 (1.09–3.58) |
| Heart failure                   | 2.79 (0.83–9.34) | 2.35 (0.70–7.89) | 1.84 (0.23–14.81) |
| Familial hypercholesterolemia   | 35.77 (16.39–76.08) | 41.97 (18.74–93.98) | 143.50 (36.65–561.83) |
| **Statin use**                  |                  |                  |          |
| Never                           | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) |
| Former                          | 3.75 (2.33–6.30) | 3.64 (2.14–6.19) | 3.72 (1.72–8.04) |
| Current: low intensity          | 6.37 (2.63–15.42) | 6.22 (2.50–15.47) | 4.02 (0.54–29.97) |
| Current: moderate to high intensity | 2.11 (1.20–3.71) | 2.08 (1.18–3.69) | 1.79 (0.72–4.42) |
| **Use of ezetimibe**            |                  |                  |          |
| Never or former                 | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) |
| **Current**                     | 52.22 (24.22–112.63) | 55.38 (25.23–121.54) | 98.10 (31.67–303.87) |
| **LDL-C category, mg/dL**       |                  |                  |          |
| 100–<130                        | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) | 1 (Reference) |
| 130–<190                        | 3.78 (2.25–6.35) | 3.76 (2.23–6.34) | 3.30 (1.45–7.53) |
| ≥190                            | 10.48 (6.12–17.96) | 11.56 (6.64–20.12) | 18.89 (7.66–48.56) |

Model 1: unadjusted. Model 2: adjusted for age, sex, and race/ethnicity. Model 3: adjusted for all the variables listed in the left-hand column of the table. There were 64 (5.2%) veterans in the severe hypercholesterolemia cohort with missing data on race. LDL-C indicates low-density lipoprotein cholesterol; PCSK9i, proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9 inhibitor; and VISN, Veterans Integrated Service Network.

*Other indicates American Indian or Alaska Native, Mixed, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or missing ethnicity.
ASCVD cohort, veterans taking low-intensity statins were 2.6 times as likely to initiate PCSK9i compared with never users. The greater likelihood of PCSK9i initiation among low-intensity statin users may be indicative of patients exhibiting some level of statin intolerance to higher doses, although this remains an area of future research. In addition, current use of ezetimibe among PCSK9i initiators was substantially higher than prior reports (42.4% versus 1.1%–19.7% in prior studies).6–8,28 The greater likelihood of PCSK9i initiation among veterans currently taking a statin of any intensity or currently taking ezetimibe could be attributed to the VHA appropriate use criteria for PCSK9i use, which encourage the addition of ezetimibe to statin therapy before PCSK9i initiation.12

In the current analysis, we did not find a linear association between age and PCSK9i initiation. Among veterans with a history of ASCVD, those aged 65 to <75 years were more likely, whereas those aged ≥75 years were less likely, to initiate a PCSK9i versus their counterparts aged <65 years. A shorter life expectancy and therapeutic nihilism (ie, perception of low benefit) may contribute to explain the lower use of a PCSK9i among the old veterans with a history of ASCVD. Among veterans with primary severe hypercholesterolemia, those aged ≥75 years were more likely to initiate a PCSK9i versus those aged <65 years. It is possible that older adults with severe hypercholesterolemia who have not developed ASCVD may be perceived by clinicians as more likely to benefit from additional lipid-lowering therapy with a PCSK9i versus their counterparts of younger age. The association between age and PCSK9i initiation warrants further investigation.

This study has several strengths. We used a large, national, well-characterized data source that contains a breadth of clinical and administrative variables for research purposes. The use of dispensing data identifies veterans who fulfilled a prescription for a PCSK9i, statin, or ezetimibe, which allowed more valid estimates of medication use compared with medication lists in the electronic medical record or provider order data. However, the current study should be interpreted within the context of known limitations. We defined primary severe hypercholesterolemia using any prior LDL-C ≥190 mg/dL, which may capture some patients without true FH.29 However, in a subgroup analysis changing the threshold to any prior LDL-C ≥220 mg/dL, results were consistent with the main analysis using the LDL-C ≥190 mg/dL threshold. We were not able to identify veterans with statin intolerance, which may indicate the degree to which PCSK9i are used to substitute statin therapy. Validated algorithms to identify statin-intolerant patients in claims data remain an area of research.20–32 The use of dispensing data from VHA pharmacies in the current analysis did not capture veterans who received PCSK9i directly from the clinic, manufacturer, or a non-VHA pharmacy. Although we found a reduced likelihood of PCSK9i initiation among women in the ASCVD cohort, few women were included in the analyses, and the population in this study may not be generalizable to the larger US population. Data on duration of ASCVD and severe hypercholesterolemia before each veteran’s index date were unavailable. Results from subgroup analyses should be interpreted with caution as the large number of comparisons may increase the likelihood of a spurious association.

In conclusion, among veterans with ASCVD or severe hypercholesterolemia in 2018 and 2019, several patient-level factors, including age, sex, and race/ethnicity, were significantly associated with PCSK9i initiation, suggesting an unmet treatment need in several patient groups. Preindex LDL-C levels were substantially higher among patients who initiated versus did not initiate a PCSK9i. Among those with ASCVD, women compared with men and non-Hispanic Black, Asian, and Hispanic veterans were less likely to initiate a PCSK9i than non-Hispanic White veterans. The factors associated with PCSK9i initiation among patients with high and very-high ASCVD risk in this study suggest opportunities to optimize lipid-lowering therapies.

ARTICLE INFORMATION
Received October 15, 2020; accepted March 2, 2021.

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Sources of Funding
This work was supported by an industry-academic partnership with Amgen, Inc. The academic authors conducted all analyses and maintained the rights to publish this article.

Disclosures
Drs Derington, Colantonio, Munthner, and Bress receive research support to their institution from Amgen related to the current article. Drs Monda and Mues are employees and stockholders in Amgen Inc. Dr Navar has received funding for research to her institution from Amgen, Janssen, Amarin, Sanofi, and Regeneron; and honoraria and consulting fees from Amgen, AstraZeneca, Janssen, Esperion, Amarin, Sanofi, Regeneron, NovoNordisk, Novartis, The Medicines Company, New Amsterdam, Cerner, 89Bio, and Pfizer, outside of the scope of this article. Dr Rosenson receives funding for research to his institution from Amgen, Novartis, and Regeneron; honoraria and consulting fees from Amgen, CS, CVS CareMark, Novartis, Regeneron, and 89 Bio; royalties from Wolters Kluwer (UpToDate); and stock holdings in MediMergent, LLC. The remaining authors have no disclosures to report.
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Supplemental Material
Data S1.

Supplemental Methods

Categorization of variables for analyses
- Age was categorized into <65, 65 to <75, and ≥75 years.
- Race-ethnicity was categorized into non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, Asian, Hispanic, and other/missing.
- Median income was categorized into quartiles in the ASCVD cohort and the severe hypercholesterolemia cohort, separately.
- Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN): Categorized VISN into one of four regions: Northeast, Southeast, Continental, and Pacific according to the VA regional offices map
- The Northeast region was comprised of VISNs 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, and 12. The Southeast region was comprised of VISNs 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 16. The Continental region consisted of VISNs 15, 17, 18, 19, and 23. Finally, the Pacific region was comprised of VISNs 20, 21, and 22.

Very high-risk criteria
As defined in the AHA/ACC Blood Cholesterol guideline, individuals were classified as very high-risk for future ASCVD if they had a history of multiple major ASCVD events or 1 major ASCVD event and multiple high risk conditions:
- Age ≥65 years
- Heterozygous FH
- History of prior coronary artery bypass surgery or percutaneous coronary intervention outside of the major ASCVD event(s)
- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Chronic Kidney Disease (estimated glomerular filtration rate 15-59 mL/min/1.73m²)
- Current smoking
- LDL-C ≥100 mg/dL despite statin therapy and ezetimibe
- Congestive heart failure

Priority Group Status
The VHA prescription copay structure is based on a Veteran’s priority group, categorized as a number between 1 (highest need) and 8 (lowest need) according to military service history, disability rating, income level, and participation in other benefits.

VHA Appropriate Use Criteria for PCSK9 inhibitors
During the study period, the VHA employed appropriate use criteria for PCSK9 inhibitor for both primary and secondary prevention populations. Under the appropriate use criteria, Veterans with homozygous FH alone or heterozygous FH with LDL-C reduction <50% from baseline despite maximally-tolerated statin and ezetimibe therapy are eligible for PCSK9 inhibitor. Additionally, Veterans with ASCVD with confirmed adherence to maximally-tolerated statin and ezetimibe therapy may be eligible if they also have: 1) a history of at least two ASCVD events; 2) very-high risk conditions (recurrent ASCVD events, multiple uncontrolled risk factors) and LDL-C ≥100 mg/dL; or 3) very high risk conditions (as above), LDL-C remains 70-99 mg/dL, and receiving care from a VA-authorized cardiologist, lipid specialist, endocrinologist, or expert.
### Table S1. Definitions and codes used to define history of atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease.

| **History of ASCVD** | Defined by a history of CHD, cerebrovascular disease, or peripheral artery disease, as defined below. |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **History of CHD**   | Algorithm based on ICD-9 codes: Any of the following using all available claims before the index date: |
|                      | (a) An inpatient claim diagnosis codes of 410.xx-414.xx, V45.81 or V45.82. |
|                      | (b) An outpatient or carrier file claim, linked to E&M code, with diagnosis codes of codes 410.xx-414.xx, V45.81 or V45.82. |
|                      | Algorithm based on ICD-10 codes: Any of the following using all available claims before the index date: |
|                      | (a) An inpatient claim diagnosis codes of I20.0, I21.xx, I22.xx, I24.0, I24.8, I24.9, I25.10, I25.110, I25.700, I25.710, I25.720, I25.730, I25.750, I25.760, I25.790, I25.810, I25.811, I25.812, I25.3, I25.4, I25.41, I25.42, Z95.1 or Z9861. |
|                      | (b) An outpatient or carrier file claim, linked to E&M code, with diagnosis codes of codes I20.0, I21.xx, I22.xx, I24.0, I24.8, I24.9, I25.10, I25.110, I25.700, I25.710, I25.720, I25.730, I25.750, I25.760, I25.790, I25.810, I25.811, I25.812, I25.3, I25.41, I25.42, Z95.1 or Z9861. |
|                      | Veterans who met the definition of a prior coronary revascularization, as defined below, will be also considered to have a history of CHD. |
| **Prior coronary revascularization** | Defined by ≥ 1 inpatient or outpatient procedure with a current procedure terminology (CPT) code for coronary revascularization (33510-33519, 33521-33523, 33530, 33533-33536, 92920, 92921, 92924, 92925, 92926, 92927, 92928, 92933, 92934, 92937, 92938, 92941, 92943, and 92944), an ICD-9 procedure code of 00.66, 36.0, 36.01-36.19, 36.2, or an ICD-10 procedure code starting with any of the following 4 digits: 0210, 0211, 0212, 0213, 0270, 0271, 0272, 0273, 02C0, 02C1, 02C2, 02C3, 3E07 using all available claims prior to each Veteran’s index date. In addition to having 1 inpatient or outpatient procedure, Veterans are required to meet at least 1 of the following criteria: |
|                      | • Have no inpatient claims with a diagnosis code for acute myocardial infarction (410.x0 or 410.x1 or ICD10 codes I21.xx or I22.xx) within 60 days prior to the procedure. |
|                      | • Have primary discharge diagnosis code for non-elective CHD-related hospitalization prior to the index date (arrhythmia [ICD-9 diagnosis code of 427.xx, except 427.5 or ICD10 diagnosis code of I47.1, I47.2, I47.9, I48.91, I48.92, I49.01, I49.02, I49.1, I49.3, I49.40, I49.49, I49.5, I49.8, I49.9, R00.1], cardiac arrest [ICD-9 diagnosis code of 427.5 or ICD-10 diagnosis code of I46.9], heart failure [ICD-9 diagnosis code of 402.01, 402.11, 402.91, 404.01, 404.03, 404.11, 404.13, 404.91, 404.93, 428.x or ICD-10 diagnosis code of I11.0, I13.0, I13.2, I50.1, I50.20, I50.21, I50.22, I50.23, I50.30, I50.31, I50.32, I50.33, I50.40, I50.41, I50.42, I50.43, I50.9], and unstable angina [ICD-9 diagnosis code of 411.xx or ICD-10 diagnosis code of I20.0, I24.0, I24.1, I24.8]). |
| **Cerebrovascular disease** | Algorithm based on ICD-9 codes: Any of the following using all available claims before the index date: |
|                      | • At least 1 inpatient ICD-9 diagnosis (primary or secondary position) of 433.x1 or 434.x1 |
|                      | • At least 1 outpatient or carrier claim with ICD-9 diagnoses (any position) of 433.x1 or 434.x1, linked by CLAIM_ID to an ambulatory physician evaluation and management claim. |
|                      | • At least 1 claim with ICD-9 diagnoses (any position) of 433.x1 or 434.x1 in other file types (Home Health Agency [HHA], durable medical equipment [DME], Hospice, SNF). |
Algorithm based on ICD-10 codes: Any of the following using all available claims before the index date:

- At least 1 inpatient ICD-10 diagnosis (primary or secondary position) I63.xx
- At least 1 outpatient or carrier claim with ICD-10 diagnoses (any position) of I63.xx linked by CLAIM_ID to an ambulatory physician evaluation and management claim
- At least 1 claim with ICD-10 diagnoses (any position) of I63.xx in other file types (Home Health Agency [HHA], durable medical equipment [DME], Hospice, SNF).
- At least one inpatient ICD-10 procedure code in ('03CH0ZZ', '03CH4ZZ', '03CJ0ZZ', '03CJ4ZZ', '03CK0ZZ', '03CK4ZZ', '03CL0ZZ', '03CL4ZZ', '03CM0ZZ', '03CM4ZZ', '03CM0ZZ', '03CM4ZZ', '03CN0ZZ', '03CN4ZZ', '03RH07Z', '03RH0JZ', '03RH0KZ', '03RH47Z', '03RH4KZ', '03RJ07Z', '03RJ0KZ', '03RJ47Z', '03RJ4KZ', '03RJ0JZ', '03RJ0KZ', '03RJ4JZ', '03RJ4KZ', '03RJ07Z', '03RJ0KZ', '03RJ47Z', '03RJ4KZ', '03RJ0JZ', '03RJ0KZ', '03RJ4JZ', '03RJ4KZ', '03RJ07Z', '03RJ0KZ', '03RJ47Z', '03RJ4KZ', '03RJ0JZ', '03RJ0KZ', '03RJ4JZ', '03RJ4KZ', '03RJ07Z', '03RJ0KZ', '03RJ47Z', '03RJ4KZ', '03RJ0JZ', '03RJ0KZ', '03RJ4JZ', '03RJ4KZ', '03RJ07Z', '03RJ0KZ', '03RJ47Z', '03RJ4KZ', '03RJ0JZ', '03RJ0KZ', '03RJ4JZ', '03RJ4KZ', '03RJ07Z', '03RJ0KZ', '03RJ47Z', '03RJ4KZ', '03RJ0JZ', '03RJ0KZ', '03RJ4JZ', '03RJ4KZ')

Veterans with ≥1 inpatient or outpatient claim with a CPT code for carotid revascularization (35301, 35390, 37215, 37216, 0005T, 0075T, or 0076) will be also considered to have a history of cerebrovascular disease.

### History of PAD

Algorithm based on ICD-9 codes: Any of the following using all available claims prior to the index date:

(a) ≥1 inpatient claim with a discharge diagnosis code of peripheral vascular disease (ICD-9-CM diagnosis codes 440.20-440.24, 440.31, 444.2, 443.9, or 444.81) in any position, or

(b) ≥2 physician evaluation and management outpatient or carrier claims with an ICD-9-CM diagnosis code of peripheral vascular disease on separate days, or

(c) ≥1 inpatient, outpatient or carrier claim with a CPT code 37205 or 75962.

Algorithm based on ICD-10 codes: Any of the following using all available claims before the index date:

(a) ≥1 inpatient claim with a discharge diagnosis code of peripheral vascular disease (ICD-10-CM diagnosis codes 'I70.209', 'I70.219', 'I70.229', 'I70.25', 'I70.269', 'I70.499', 'I73.9') or

(b) ≥2 physician evaluation and management outpatient or carrier claims with an ICD-10-CM diagnosis code of peripheral vascular disease on separate days, or

(c) ≥1 inpatient, outpatient or carrier claim with a CPT code 37205 or 75962.
| Variable            | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Patient Characteristics** |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Age                 | Age of Veterans calculated on the index date based on the date of birth available in the Veteran summary file.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Sex                 | Male or female                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Race                | Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, and Other                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Area level income   | Using ZIP and FIPS codes based on data obtained from the American Community Survey. The variable ZCTA was matched to ZIP code in the American Community Survey. If ZCTA and ZIP did not match, then FIPS code (county level) from the American Community Survey was used.                                                                 |
| Supplemental health insurance | Dichotomous variable (yes/no) describes whether the Veteran has additional health insurance coverage beyond VHA insurance coverage.                                                                                                                                            |
| VISN region         | The Veteran’s Integrated Service Network (VISN) in which the Veteran receives most of his or her care. VISN was further categorized into Northeast, Southeast, Continental, and Pacific regions according to the VA regional offices map (see Supplemental Methods).                                                                                           |
| Priority group status | Categorized as a number between 1 (highest need) and 8 (lowest need) according to military service history, disability rating, income level, and participation in other benefits (see Supplemental Methods).                                                                                                                                         |
| **Current Smoking** | Algorithm based on ICD-9 diagnosis codes: Any of the following within 365 days prior to the index date. (a) ≥1 hospitalization with a discharge diagnosis code of tobacco use (ICD-9 CM diagnosis code of 305.1, 649.0x, 989.84, or V15.82) in any discharge position (b) ≥1 physician evaluation and management visit with a discharge diagnosis code of tobacco use (ICD-9-CM diagnosis code of 305.1, 649.0x, 989.84, or V15.82) in any discharge position (c) ≥1 hospitalization with a discharge diagnosis code or physician evaluation and management visit of tobacco use with a CPT code of 99406, 99407, G0436, G0437, G9016, S9453, S4995, G9276, G9458, 1034F, 4004F, 4001F (d) ≥1 pharmacy fill for nicotine or varenicline. Algorithm based on ICD-10 diagnosis codes: Any of the following within 365 days prior to the index date. (a) ≥1 hospitalization with a discharge diagnosis code of tobacco use (ICD-10 CM diagnosis code of F17.200, F17.201, F17.210, F17.211, F17.220, F17.221, F17.290, F17.291, or Z87.891) in any discharge position (b) ≥1 outpatient visit with a discharge diagnosis code of tobacco use (ICD-10 CM diagnosis code of F17.200, F17.201, F17.210, F17.211, F17.220, F17.221, F17.290, F17.291, or Z87.891) in any discharge position (c) ≥1 hospitalization with a discharge diagnosis code or physician evaluation and management visit of tobacco use with a CPT code of 99406, 99407, G0436, G0437, G9016, S9453, S4995, G9276, G9458, 1034F, 4004F, 4001F (d) ≥1 pharmacy fill for nicotine or varenicline. |
| **Comorbid conditions** |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Diabetes            | Algorithm for diabetes based on ICD-9 codes: Any of the following using all available claims before the index date: (a) At least 1 inpatient claim with a discharge ICD-9 diagnosis (any position) of 250.xx, 357.2, 362.0x, or 366.41. (b) At least 2 carrier claims, carrier line or outpatient claims with ICD-9 diagnoses (any position) of 250.xx, 357.2, 362.0x, or 366.41, linked by CLAIM_ID to an ambulatory physician evaluation and management claim, with the 2 claims occurring at least 7 days apart. (c) At least 1 pharmacy claim for an oral antidiabetic drug fill or insulin. |
Algorithm for diabetes based on ICD-10 codes: Any of the following all available claims before the index date:

(a) At least 1 inpatient claim with a discharge ICD-10 diagnosis (any position) of 'E0836', 'E0842', 'E0936', 'E0942', 'E1010', 'E1011', 'E1029', 'E10311', 'E10319', 'E1036', 'E1039', 'E1040', 'E1042', 'E1051', 'E10618', 'E10620', 'E10621', 'E10622', 'E10625', 'E10630', 'E10638', 'E10641', 'E10649', 'E1065', 'E1069', 'E108', 'E109', 'E1100', 'E1101', 'E1129', 'E11311', 'E11319', 'E11329', 'E11339', 'E11349', 'E11359', 'E1136', 'E1139', 'E1140', 'E1142', 'E1151', 'E11618', 'E11620', 'E11621', 'E11622', 'E11628', 'E11630', 'E11638', 'E11641', 'E11649', 'E1165', 'E1169', 'E118', 'E119', 'E1310', 'E1336', 'E1342'.

(b) At least 2 carrier claims, carrier line or outpatient claims with ICD-10 diagnoses (any position) of 'E0836', 'E0842', 'E0936', 'E0942', 'E1010', 'E1011', 'E1029', 'E10311', 'E10319', 'E1036', 'E1039', 'E1040', 'E1042', 'E1051', 'E10618', 'E10620', 'E10621', 'E10622', 'E10625', 'E10630', 'E10638', 'E10641', 'E10649', 'E1065', 'E1069', 'E108', 'E109', 'E1100', 'E1101', 'E1129', 'E11311', 'E11319', 'E11329', 'E11339', 'E11349', 'E11359', 'E1136', 'E1139', 'E1140', 'E1142', 'E1151', 'E11618', 'E11620', 'E11621', 'E11622', 'E11628', 'E11630', 'E11638', 'E11641', 'E11649', 'E1165', 'E1169', 'E118', 'E119', 'E1310', 'E1336', 'E1342', linked by CLAIM_ID to an ambulatory physician evaluation and management claim, with the 2 claims occurring at least 7 days apart.

(c) At least 1 pharmacy claim for an oral antidiabetic drug fill or insulin.

Hypertension
Algorithm based on ICD-9 codes: Any of the following using all available claims before the index date:

• ≥1 inpatient claim with an ICD-9 discharge diagnosis code of 401.x, 403.0x, 403.1x, 403.9x in any discharge diagnosis position
• ≥2 outpatient claims with an ICD-9 diagnosis code of 401.x, 403.0x, 403.1x, 403.9x in any position at least 30 days apart

Algorithm based on ICD-10 codes: Any of the following using all available claims before the index date:

• 1 inpatient claim with an ICD-10 discharge diagnosis code of I10, I12.0, I12.9 in any discharge diagnosis position
• ≥2 outpatient claims with an ICD-10 diagnosis code of I10, I12.0, I12.9 in any position at least 30 days apart

Algorithm based on pharmacy fills: A pharmacy fill for an antihypertensive medication within 365 days prior to the index date.

Chronic kidney disease
Algorithm based on ICD-9 codes: Any of the following using all available claims before the index date (this definition is from the United States Renal Data System [USRDS] annual report):

(a) ≥1 inpatient claim with a discharge diagnosis code of chronic kidney disease (ICD-9 diagnosis code of 016.0, 095.4, 189.0, 189.9, 223.0, 236.91, 250.4, 271.4, 274.1, 283.11, 403.x1, 403.x0, 404.x2, 404.x3, 404.x0, 404.x1, 440.1, 442.1, 447.3, 572.4, 580–588, 591, 642.1, 646.2, 753.12–753.17, 753.19, 753.2, 794.4) in any discharge diagnosis position.

(b) ≥1 physician evaluation and management visit with a diagnosis code of chronic kidney disease (ICD-9-CM diagnosis code of 016.0, 095.4, 189.0, 189.9, 223.0, 236.91, 250.4, 271.4, 274.1, 283.11, 403.x1, 403.x0, 404.x2, 404.x3, 404.x0, 404.x1, 440.1, 442.1, 447.3, 572.4, 580–588.xx, 591, 642.1, 646.2, 753.12–753.17, 753.19, 753.2, or 794.4) in any position.

(c) Additionally, if the flag ESRD_IND in the Master Veteran summary file is checked then the participant will be categorized as having a history of CKD.

(d) Estimated glomerular filtration (eGFR) rate of 15-59 mL/min/1.73m²
### Algorithm based on ICD-10 codes: Any of the following using all available claims prior to the index date:

**Heart failure**

(a) ≥1 inpatient claim with a discharge diagnosis code of chronic kidney disease (ICD-10 diagnosis code of ‘A1811’, ‘A5275’, ‘C649’, ‘C689’, ‘D3000’, ‘D4100’, ‘D4120’, ‘D593’, ‘E1021’, ‘E1029’, ‘E1121’, ‘E748’, ‘I120’, ‘I129’, ‘I130’, ‘I1310’, ‘I1311’, ‘I132’, ‘I701’, ‘I722’, ‘K767’, ‘M1030’, ‘N003’, ‘N008’, ‘N009’, ‘N013’, ‘N022’, ‘N032’, ‘N033’, ‘N035’, ‘N039’, ‘N040’, ‘N043’, ‘N044’, ‘N048’, ‘N049’, ‘N052’, ‘N055’, ‘N058’, ‘N059’, ‘N08’, ‘N1330’, ‘N170’, ‘N171’, ‘N172’, ‘N178’, ‘N179’, ‘N181’, ‘N182’, ‘N183’, ‘N184’, ‘N185’, ‘N186’, ‘N189’, ‘N19’, ‘N250’, ‘N251’, ‘N2581’, ‘N2589’, ‘N259’, ‘N269’, ‘Q6102’, ‘Q6119’, ‘Q612’, ‘Q613’, ‘Q614’, ‘Q615’, ‘Q618’, ‘Q6210’, ‘Q6211’, ‘Q6212’, ‘Q6231’, ‘Q6239’, ‘R944’) in any diagnosis position.

(b) ≥1 physician evaluation and management visit with a diagnosis code of chronic kidney disease (ICD-10-CM diagnosis code of ‘A1811’, ‘A5275’, ‘C649’, ‘C689’, ‘D3000’, ‘D4100’, ‘D4120’, ‘D593’, ‘E1021’, ‘E1029’, ‘E1121’, ‘E748’, ‘I120’, ‘I129’, ‘I130’, ‘I1310’, ‘I1311’, ‘I132’, ‘I701’, ‘I722’, ‘K767’, ‘M1030’, ‘N003’, ‘N008’, ‘N009’, ‘N013’, ‘N022’, ‘N032’, ‘N033’, ‘N035’, ‘N039’, ‘N040’, ‘N043’, ‘N044’, ‘N048’, ‘N049’, ‘N052’, ‘N055’, ‘N058’, ‘N059’, ‘N08’, ‘N1330’, ‘N170’, ‘N171’, ‘N172’, ‘N178’, ‘N179’, ‘N181’, ‘N182’, ‘N183’, ‘N184’, ‘N185’, ‘N186’, ‘N189’, ‘N19’, ‘N250’, ‘N251’, ‘N2581’, ‘N2589’, ‘N259’, ‘N269’, ‘Q6102’, ‘Q6119’, ‘Q612’, ‘Q613’, ‘Q614’, ‘Q615’, ‘Q618’, ‘Q6210’, ‘Q6211’, ‘Q6212’, ‘Q6231’, ‘Q6239’, ‘R944’) in any position.

(c) Additionally, if the flag ESRD_IND in the Master Veteran summary file is checked then the participant will be categorized as having a history of CKD.

(d) Estimated glomerular filtration rate of 15-59 mL/min/1.73m². The eGFR reading used is the most recent within the one-year pre-index period. To account for data/reading errors, only eGFR values between 0 and 250 were considered.

### Heart failure

**Algorithm based on ICD-9 codes: Any of the following using all available claims before the index date:**

(a) ≥ 1 inpatient claim with ICD-9 diagnoses (any position) of 402.01, 402.11, 402.91, 404.01, 404.03, 404.11, 404.13, 404.91, 404.93, 428.x, or

(b) ≥ 2 outpatient or carrier claims on separate calendar days with ICD-9 diagnoses (any position) of 402.01, 402.11, 402.91, 404.01, 404.03, 404.11, 404.13, 404.91, 404.93, 428.x.

**Algorithm based on ICD-10 codes: Any of the following using all available claims before the index date:**

(a) ≥ 1 inpatient claim with ICD-10 diagnoses (any position) of ‘I110’, ‘I130’, ‘I132’, ‘I501’, ‘I5020’, ‘I5021’, ‘I5022’, ‘I5023’, ‘I5030’, ‘I5031’, ‘I5032’, ‘I5033’, ‘I5040’, ‘I5041’, ‘I5042’, ‘I5043’, ‘I509’, or

(b) ≥ 2 outpatient or carrier claims on separate calendar days with ICD-10 diagnoses (any position) of ‘I110’, ‘I130’, ‘I132’, ‘I501’, ‘I5020’, ‘I5021’, ‘I5022’, ‘I5023’, ‘I5030’, ‘I5031’, ‘I5032’, ‘I5033’, ‘I5040’, ‘I5041’, ‘I5042’, ‘I5043’, ‘I509’, or

### Familial hypercholesterolemia

≥1 physician evaluation and management outpatient visit or ≥1 inpatient claim with a diagnosis code of familial hypercholesterolemia (ICD-10-CM diagnosis code of E78.00 and E78.01) in any position using all available claims before the index date.

### Medication use

**Statin use**

Defined using all available pharmacy fills for a statin prior to each Veteran’s index date and categorized as:

- **Never:** have no pharmacy fills for a statin.
Former: have ≥1 pharmacy fill for a statin ≥90 days before each Veteran’s index date, with no pharmacy fills for a statin within 90 days prior to the index date.
Current low intensity: have ≥1 pharmacy fill for a low-intensity statin within 90 days prior to each Veteran’s index date.
Current moderate- or high-intensity: have ≥1 pharmacy fill for a moderate- or high-intensity statin within 90 days prior to each Veteran’s index date.

### Use of ezetimibe
Defined using all available pharmacy fills for ezetimibe prior to each Veteran’s index date and categorized as:

- Never: have no pharmacy fills for ezetimibe.
- Former: have ≥1 pharmacy fill for ezetimibe ≥90 days before each Veteran’s index date, with no pharmacy fills for ezetimibe within 90 days prior to the index date.
- Current: have ≥1 pharmacy fill for ezetimibe within 90 days prior to each Veteran’s index date.

### ASCVD events

#### Recent acute coronary syndrome\(^\text{13}\)
Overnight hospitalization with a discharge diagnosis code for myocardial infarction (ICD9 codes 410.x0 or 410.x1 or ICD10 codes I21.xx or I22.xx) or unstable angina (ICD9 codes 411.1, 411.81, 411.89 or ICD10 codes I20.0, I24.0, I24.8, I24.9, I25.110, I25.700, I25.710, I25.720, I25.730, I25.750, I25.760, I25.790) in any position within 365 days prior to each Veteran’s index date.

#### Prior acute myocardial infarction\(^\text{13}\)
Overnight hospitalization with a discharge diagnosis code for myocardial infarction (ICD9 codes 410.x0 or 410.x1 or ICD10 codes I21.xx or I22.xx) in any position before 365 days prior to each Veteran’s index date (acute myocardial infarctions within 365 days prior to each Veteran’s index date are defined as acute coronary syndromes).

#### History of myocardial infarction\(^\text{13}\)
Inpatient or outpatient claim with a code for ‘old MI’ (ICD9 code 412.xx or ICD10 code I25.2) in any position prior to the earliest recent acute coronary syndrome or prior acute myocardial infarction (as defined above).

#### Prior acute ischemic stroke\(^\text{14}\)
Overnight hospitalization with a discharge diagnosis code for ischemic stroke (ICD9 codes 433.x1 or 434.x1, or ICD10 code I63.xx) in the primary position prior to each Veteran’s index date.

#### History of ischemic stroke\(^\text{14}\)
Outpatient claim with a code for ischemic stroke (ICD9 codes 433.x1 or 434.x1, or ICD10 code I63.xx) in any position or an inpatient claim with a code for ischemic stroke (ICD9 codes 433.x1 or 434.x1, or ICD10 code I63.xx) in any position other than the primary position prior to the earliest prior acute ischemic stroke (as defined above), or prior to the Veteran’s index date (for Veterans without a prior acute ischemic stroke).

#### Had a repeat ASCVD event while taking a statin and ezetimibe
In the one-year pre index period, had 2 ASCVD events and had ≥1 pharmacy fill for a statin and ezetimibe within 90 days prior to the 2nd ASCVD event.

### Laboratory values

#### LDL-C Level
The LDL-C value closest to the index date in the pre-index period. Defined using OMOP’s mapping where LOINC_Mapped in ('13457-7','18262-6','2089-1','2574-2','9346-8') and Topography in ('SERUM','PLASMA','BLOOD','SER/PLA','BLOOD','SER/PLAS','BLOOD','WS-PLASMA','CC SERUM','HIBBING SERUM','MOFH SERUM','OPCC-SERUM','BLOOD VENOUS','LC-SER','SERUM (QUEST)')

#### Estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR)
Used to define chronic kidney disease. Calculated using the Modified Diet in Renal Disease equation using the serum creatinine value closest to the index date in the pre-index period. Defined using OMOP’s mapping where LOINC_mapped in '33914-3' and...
Topography in ('PLASMA', 'SERUM', 'BLOOD', 'SER/PLA', 'BLOOD*', 'BLOOD.', 'VENOUS BLOOD', 'BLOOD, VENOUS',
'ARTERIAL BLOOD', 'PLAS', 'SER/PLAS').
Table S3. Characteristics of initiators and non-initiators of a PCSK9 inhibitor in the Veterans Health Administration among Veterans in the ASCVD cohort, overall and among subgroups.

| Characteristic | Overall (n = 2,394) | Non-initiator (n = 9,576) | History of CHD (n = 2,314) | Non-initiator (n = 8,204) | History of cerebrovascular disease (n = 344) | Non-initiator (n = 1,430) | History of PAD (n = 441) | Non-initiator (n = 1,676) | Very high risk for future ASCVD (n = 1,238) | Non-initiator (n = 3,693) | Current moderate- or high-intensity statin user (n = 733) | Non-initiator (n = 4,022) |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Index date calendar year 2019 | 1,544 (64.5) | 617 (64.5) | 1,487 (64.3) | 5,288 (64.5) | 241 (70.1) | 942 (65.9) | 297 (70.1) | 1,070 (63.8) | 785 (63.4) | 2,402 (65.0) | 487 (66.4) | 2,611 (64.9) |
| Age, years mean (SD) | 70.5 (11.8) | 68.1 (8.6) | 70.5 (11.8) | 68.1 (8.7) | 70.5 (11.8) | 69.1 (7.6) | 71.2 (11.2) | 69.1 (7.6) | 73.2 (9.9) | 68.0 (8.8) | 72.1 (10.3) | 70.6 (9.7) |
| Age category, years | <65 | 631 (26.4) | 2,454 (25.6) | 606 (26.2) | 2,088 (25.5) | 73 (21.2) | 342 (23.9) | 72 (16.3) | 287 (17.1) | 326 (26.3) | 764 (20.7) | 285 (38.9) |
| 65 to <75 | 1,321 (56.2) | 4,034 (42.1) | 1,273 (55.0) | 3,432 (41.8) | 207 (60.2) | 617 (43.1) | 272 (61.7) | 747 (44.6) | 691 (55.8) | 1,631 (44.2) | 369 (50.3) | 1,952 (48.5) |
| ≥75 | 442 (18.5) | 3,088 (32.2) | 435 (18.8) | 2,684 (32.7) | 64 (18.6) | 471 (32.9) | 97 (22.0) | 642 (38.3) | 221 (12.9) | 1,298 (35.1) | 79 (10.8) | 1,148 (28.5) |
| Female | 115 (4.8) | 480 (5.0) | 105 (4.5) | 393 (4.8) | 22 (6.4) | 75 (5.2) | 20 (4.5) | 61 (3.6) | 59 (4.8) | 152 (4.1) | 34 (4.6) | 147 (3.7) |
| Race-Ethnicity | Non-Hispanic, White | 1,975 (82.5) | 6,782 (70.8) | 1,918 (82.9) | 5,893 (71.8) | 284 (82.6) | 972 (68.0) | 365 (82.8) | 1,172 (69.9) | 1,015 (82.0) | 2,604 (70.5) | 559 (76.3) | 2,916 (72.5) |
| Non-Hispanic, Black | 248 (10.4) | 1,631 (17.0) | 230 (9.9) | 1,322 (16.1) | 38 (11.0) | 300 (21.0) | 50 (11.3) | 334 (19.9) | 132 (10.7) | 693 (18.8) | 100 (13.6) | 656 (16.3) |
| Asian | 3 (0.1) | 51 (0.5) | 3 (0.1) | 44 (0.5) | 2 (0.6) | 6 (0.4) | 0 (0.0) | 2 (0.1) | 3 (0.2) | 11 (0.3) | 3 (0.4) | 20 (0.5) |
| Hispanic | 73 (3.0) | 533 (5.6) | 69 (3.0) | 453 (5.5) | 11 (3.2) | 66 (4.6) | 10 (2.3) | 93 (5.5) | 44 (3.6) | 190 (5.1) | 31 (4.2) | 222 (5.5) |
| Other | 29 (1.2) | 176 (1.8) | 28 (1.2) | 143 (1.7) | 4 (1.2) | 35 (2.4) | 6 (1.4) | 27 (1.6) | 19 (1.5) | 69 (1.9) | 11 (1.5) | 66 (1.6) |
| Missing | 66 (2.8) | 403 (4.2) | 66 (2.9) | 349 (4.3) | 5 (1.5) | 51 (3.6) | 10 (2.3) | 48 (2.9) | 25 (2.0) | 126 (3.4) | 29 (4.0) | 142 (3.5) |
| Median area-level income | $41,757 (51.5) | $51,357 (51.5) | $64,870 (51.5) | $212,394 (51.5) | $243,750 (51.5) | $283,000 (51.5) | $323,250 (51.5) | $363,500 (51.5) | $403,750 (51.5) | $444,000 (51.5) | $484,250 (51.5) | $524,500 (51.5) |
| Health insurance | 2,001 (83.7) | 7,921 (83.0) | 1,941 (84.0) | 6,833 (83.5) | 292 (85.1) | 1,168 (82.0) | 398 (89.7) | 1,451 (86.8) | 1,038 (84.0) | 3,107 (84.4) | 570 (77.8) | 3,350 (83.5) |
| Priority group | 1 | 1,159 (48.5) | 3,643 (38.2) | 1,117 (48.4) | 3,180 (38.9) | 175 (51.2) | 540 (37.9) | 235 (53.4) | 607 (36.3) | 600 (48.5) | 1,355 (36.8) | 391 (53.4) | 1,694 (42.2) |
| 2 to 8 | 1,229 (51.5) | 5,902 (61.8) | 1,191 (51.6) | 5,002 (61.1) | 167 (48.8) | 883 (62.1) | 205 (46.8) | 1,066 (63.7) | 636 (48.6) | 2,326 (63.2) | 341 (46.6) | 2,320 (57.8) |
| VISN Northeast | 692 (28.9) | 2,607 (27.2) | 668 (28.9) | 2,239 (27.3) | 92 (26.7) | 360 (25.2) | 151 (34.2) | 527 (31.4) | 370 (29.9) | 1,052 (28.5) | 193 (26.3) | 1,133 (28.2) |
| Comorbidities | Hazard ratio (95% CI) | P value |
|---------------|----------------------|---------|
| Diabetes      | 1.220 (51.0)         |         |
| Hypertension  | 2.179 (80.8)         |         |
| Chronic kidney disease | 1.050 (3.833) |         |
| Heart failure | 535 (22.3)           |         |
| Familial hypercholesterolem ia | 181 (7.6) |         |
| Very high-risk for ASCVD events | 1,238 (3.693) |         |

**ASCVD events**

- Numbers are expressed as number (percentage) unless otherwise indicated.
- ASCVD: atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease; CHD: coronary heart disease; IQR: interquartile range; LDL-C: low density lipoprotein cholesterol; PAD: peripheral artery disease; PCSK9: Proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9; SD: standard deviation; VISN: Veterans Integrated Service Network. *Defined as a history of multiple major ASCVD events or 1 major ASCVD event and multiple high-risk conditions based on the presence of at least one of the following: age ≥ 65 years, heterozygous familial hypercholesterolemia, history of prior coronary artery bypass surgery or percutaneous coronary intervention outside of the major ASCVD event(s), diabetes, hypertension, chronic kidney disease (eGFR 15-59 mL/min/1.73m2), current smoking, LDL-C ≥ 100 mg/dL despite maximally tolerated statin therapy and ezetimibe, or congestive heart failure. † P value <0.05 for comparison between initiators and non-initiators.
Table S4. Odds ratios for initiating a PCSK9 inhibitor associated with patient characteristics among Veterans in the ASCVD cohort in select subgroups.

| Characteristics | History of CHD | History of cerebrovascular disease | History of PAD | Very high risk for future ASCVD | Taking moderate/high intensity statin |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                 | N, initiators / non-initiators | N, initiators / non-initiators | N, initiators / non-initiators | N, initiators / non-initiators | N, initiators / non-initiators |
| Age category, years | 2,314/8,204 | 344/1,430 | 441/1,674 | 1,238/3,693 | 733/4,022 |
| <65 | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) |
| 65 to <75 | 1.38 (1.10, 1.73) | 0.72 (0.04, 12.24) | 4.34 (0.81, 23.30) | 1.32 (0.81, 2.16) | 0.80 (0.44, 1.44) |
| >=75 | 0.65 (0.49, 0.85) | 0.11 (0.00, 3.80) | 1.06 (0.16, 6.85) | 0.37 (0.21, 0.64) | 0.28 (0.12, 0.62) |
| Female | 0.62 (0.42, 0.91) | 7.89 (0.30, 208.72) | 0.35 (0.04, 3.26) | 1.18 (0.53, 2.64) | 0.77 (0.23, 2.59) |
| Race-Ethnicity | | | | | |
| Non-Hispanic, White | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) |
| Non-Hispanic, Black | 0.31 (0.24, 0.40) | 0.08 (0.00, 2.93) | 0.41 (0.08, 2.23) | 0.32 (0.19, 0.53) | 0.34 (0.17, 0.68) |
| Asian | 0.05 (0.01, 0.26) | 3.21 (0.00, 1) | * | 0.06 (0.00, 1.21) | 0.01 (0.00, 0.10) |
| Hispanic | 0.42 (0.27, 0.64) | 0.01 (0.00, 4.96) | 0.17 (0.01, 2.27) | 0.53 (0.22, 1.30) | 0.24 (0.08, 0.70) |
| Other | 0.22 (0.11, 0.46) | 0.08 (0.00, 4.14) | 0.01 (0.00, 2.66) | 0.51 (0.14, 1.88) | 0.43 (0.08, 2.32) |
| Missing | 0.78 (0.51, 1.18) | 0.00 (0.00, 0.52) | 28.12 (0.14, 5725.11) | 0.99 (0.35, 2.79) | 0.58 (0.21, 1.60) |
| Median area-level income | | | | | |
| Q1 ($0 - $41,757) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) |
| Q2 ($41,758 - $51,357) | 1.03 (0.82, 1.29) | 5.11 (0.55, 47.77) | 0.41 (0.08, 2.16) | 1.11 (0.69, 1.78) | 1.64 (0.92, 2.92) |
| Q3 ($51,363 - $64,870) | 1.19 (0.95, 1.50) | 1.22 (0.25, 5.95) | 0.37 (0.08, 1.71) | 1.05 (0.64, 1.70) | 1.64 (0.89, 3.02) |
| Q4 ($64,878 - $212,394) | 1.29 (1.02, 1.62) | 3.30 (0.38, 28.90) | 0.62 (0.15, 2.58) | 1.22 (0.75, 1.97) | 1.65 (0.87, 3.14) |
| Health insurance | | | | | |
| No | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) |
| Yes | 1.13 (0.88, 1.45) | 0.19 (0.01, 3.97) | 0.30 (0.05, 1.74) | 1.10 (0.65, 1.85) | 1.10 (0.60, 2.03) |
| Priority group | | | | | |
| 1 | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) |
| 2 to 8 | 0.88 (0.75, 1.04) | 0.21 (0.02, 2.00) | 0.40 (0.15, 1.08) | 0.87 (0.61, 1.23) | 0.81 (0.52, 1.28) |
| VISN region | | | | | |
| Northeast | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) |
| Southeast | 1.00 (0.82, 1.21) | 1.75 (0.28, 10.96) | 2.83 (0.76, 10.58) | 0.92 (0.61, 1.40) | 1.18 (0.72, 1.94) |
| Continental | 0.80 (0.63, 1.01) | 0.27 (0.03, 2.54) | 0.22 (0.04, 1.24) | 0.67 (0.40, 1.10) | 0.83 (0.45, 1.54) |
| Pacific | 0.58 (0.43, 0.77) | 0.16 (0.01, 4.24) | 0.18 (0.04, 0.94) | 0.43 (0.23, 0.79) | 0.39 (0.17, 0.91) |
| Smoking status | | | | | |
| Never/former | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) | 1 (Ref) |
| Current | 0.84 (0.67, 1.05) | 0.09 (0.00, 1.56) | 2.78 (0.78, 9.90) | 0.82 (0.55, 1.21) | 0.85 (0.49, 1.48) |
| Comorbidities | | | | | |
| Diabetes | 1.47 (1.25, 1.74) | 3.11 (0.49, 19.86) | 1.92 (0.63, 5.83) | 1.39 (1.01, 1.93) | 0.95 (0.60, 1.50) |
| Hypertension | 1.80 (1.38, 2.34) | 1.20 (0.02, 63.61) | 3.22 (0.56, 18.52) | 1.08 (0.54, 2.16) | 1.28 (0.64, 2.56) |
| Chronic kidney disease | 1.08 (0.91, 1.28) | 3.72 (0.47, 29.40) | 0.71 (0.24, 2.13) | 1.20 (0.85, 1.67) | 1.58 (1.01, 2.48) |
| Heart failure | 1.62 (1.31, 2.00) | 0.47 (0.06, 3.80) | 1.93 (0.52, 7.24) | 1.50 (1.01, 2.23) | 1.63 (0.96, 2.78) |
| Condition                       | Statin use | LDL-c category, mg/dL |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
|                                | Never      | 70 to <100            | 100 to <130            | 130 to <190            |
| Familial hypercholesterolemia  | 1 (Ref)    | 1 (Ref)               | 1 (Ref)                | 1 (Ref)                |
| History of CHD                 | 1 (Ref)    | 1 (Ref)               | 1 (Ref)                | 1 (Ref)                |
| Prior coronary revascularization| 1.31       | 70.12 (49.49, 99.34)  | 3.43 (2.76, 4.25)      | 14.38 (11.49, 17.98)   |
| Cerebrovascular disease         | 2.60       | 78.43 (3.28, 1876.54) | 22.30 (1.33, 372.40)   | 62.30 (5.16, 752.63)   |
| Peripheral artery disease       | 1.24       | 59.08 (8.63, 404.27)  | 13.17 (2.97, 58.33)    | 22.75 (5.59, 92.53)    |
| Statin use                     | 1.31       | 72.5 (Ref)            | 4.17 (0.29, 17.4)      | 16.01 (10.13, 25.32)   |
| Never or Former                | 1 (Ref)    | 1 (Ref)               | 1 (Ref)                | 1 (Ref)                |
| Current                        | 70.12      | 42.77 (22.79, 80.28)  | 4.01 (2.60, 6.20)      | 17.18 (9.78, 30.17)    |
| Current - Low intensity        | 2.42       | 77.18 (3.57, 1876.54) | 22.30 (1.33, 372.40)   | 62.30 (5.16, 752.63)   |
| Current - Moderate-high intensity| 1.24      | 59.08 (8.63, 404.27)  | 13.17 (2.97, 58.33)    | 22.75 (5.59, 92.53)    |

All models adjusted for all variables in left-hand side of table.
ASCVD: atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease; CHD: coronary heart disease; LDL-C: low density lipoprotein cholesterol; PAD: peripheral artery disease; PCSK9: proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9; VISN: Veterans Integrated Service Network
* Not calculated due to low frequency or inclusion of variable in definition of subgroup.
Table S5. Characteristics of initiators and non-initiators of a PCSK9 inhibitor in the Veterans Health Administration among Veterans in the severe hypercholesterolemia cohort, overall and in subgroups.

| Characteristic                          | Overall (n = 245) | Initiator (n = 980) | Non-initiator (n = 980) | Prior LDL-C ≥190 mg/dL (n = 240) | Initiator (n = 971) | Non-initiator (n = 971) | Prior LDL-C ≥220 mg/dL (n = 157) | Initiator (n = 277) | Non-initiator (n = 277) |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Index date calendar year 2019          | 155 (63.3)        | 620 (63.3)          | 151 (62.9)             | 615 (63.3)                     | 91 (58.0)           | 176 (63.5)             | 59 (12.9)                        | 59.1 (12.7)         |                        |
| Age, years mean (SD)                   | 60.7 (12.3) ‡     | 58.4 (13.0) ‡       | 60.5 (12.3) ‡          | 58.5 (13.0) ‡                  | 59.0 (12.9)         | 59.1 (12.7)           |
| Age category, years                    |                   |                     |                        |                                |                     |                        |                                |                     |                        |
| <65                                    | 128 (52.2) ‡      | 625 (63.8) ‡        | 127 (52.9) ‡           | 618 (63.6) ‡                   | 90 (57.3)           | 173 (62.5)            | 38 (24.2) ‡                    | 39 (14.1) ‡         |                        |
| 65 to <75                              | 92 (37.6) ‡       | 279 (28.5) ‡        | 89 (37.1) ‡            | 277 (28.5) ‡                   | 53 (33.8)           | 80 (28.9)             | 24 (8.7)                        |                     |                        |
| ≥75                                    | 25 (10.2) ‡       | 76 (7.8) ‡          | 24 (10.0) ‡            | 76 (7.8) ‡                     | 14 (8.9)            | 24 (8.7)              |
| Female                                 | 49 (20.0) ‡       | 136 (13.9) ‡        | 49 (20.4) ‡            | 136 (14.0) ‡                   | 38 (24.2) ‡         | 39 (14.1) ‡           |
| Race-Ethnicity                         |                   |                     |                        |                                |                     |                        |                                |                     |                        |
| Non-Hispanic, White                    | 156 (63.7)        | 629 (64.2)          | 152 (63.3)             | 622 (64.1)                     | 94 (59.9)           | 175 (63.2)            |
| Non-Hispanic, Black                    | 58 (23.7)         | 189 (19.3)          | 58 (24.2)              | 187 (19.3)                     | 40 (25.5)           | 52 (18.8)             |
| Asian                                  | 1 (0.4)           | 14 (1.4)            | 1 (0.4)                | 14 (1.4)                       | 0 (0.0)             | 2 (0.7)               |
| Hispanic                               | 11 (4.5)          | 87 (8.9)            | 11 (4.6)               | 87 (9.0)                       | 9 (5.7)             | 30 (10.8)             |
| Other                                  | 5 (2.0)           | 11 (1.1)            | 5 (2.1)                | 11 (1.1)                       | 4 (2.5)             | 4 (1.4)               |
| Missing                                | 14 (5.7)          | 50 (5.1)            | 13 (5.4)               | 50 (5.1)                       | 10 (6.4)            | 14 (5.1)              |
| Median area-level income               |                   |                     |                        |                                |                     |                        |                                |                     |                        |
| Q1 ($0 - $43,173)                      | 62 (25.3)         | 244 (24.9)          | 61 (25.4)              | 242 (24.9)                     | 40 (25.5)           | 77 (27.8)             |
| Q2 ($43,264 - $51,738)                 | 47 (19.2)         | 259 (26.4)          | 46 (19.2)              | 258 (26.6)                     | 33 (21.0)           | 61 (22.0)             |
| Q3 ($51,740 - $66,333)                 | 69 (28.2)         | 238 (24.3)          | 66 (27.5)              | 234 (24.1)                     | 41 (26.1)           | 69 (24.9)             |
| Q4 ($66,359 - $174,205)                | 67 (27.3)         | 239 (24.4)          | 67 (27.9)              | 237 (24.4)                     | 43 (27.4)           | 70 (25.3)             |
| Health insurance                       | 156 (63.9)        | 562 (57.5)          | 152 (63.6)             | 557 (57.5)                     | 95 (60.9)           | 151 (54.5)            |
| Priority group                         |                   |                     |                        |                                |                     |                        |                                |                     |                        |
| 1                                      | 125 (51.2)        | 445 (45.5)          | 122 (51.0)             | 440 (45.4)                     | 81 (51.9)           | 130 (46.9)            |
| 2 to 8                                 | 119 (48.8)        | 534 (54.5)          | 117 (49.0)             | 530 (54.6)                     | 75 (48.1)           | 147 (53.1)            |
| VISN Region                            |                   |                     |                        |                                |                     |                        |                                |                     |                        |
| Northeast                              | 63 (25.7) ‡       | 209 (21.3) ‡        | 62 (25.8) ‡            | 208 (21.4) ‡                   | 37 (23.6) ‡         | 66 (23.8) ‡           |
| Southeast                              | 120 (49.0) ‡      | 394 (40.2) ‡        | 117 (48.8) ‡           | 389 (40.1) ‡                   | 83 (52.9) ‡         | 105 (37.9) ‡          |
| Continental                            | 38 (15.5) ‡       | 206 (21.0) ‡        | 37 (15.4) ‡            | 203 (20.9) ‡                   | 23 (14.6) ‡         | 65 (23.5) ‡           |
| Pacific                                | 24 (9.8) ‡        | 171 (17.4) ‡        | 24 (10.0) ‡            | 171 (17.6) ‡                   | 14 (8.9) ‡          | 41 (14.8) ‡           |
| Current smoking                        | 31 (12.7)         | 139 (14.2)          | 31 (12.9)              | 137 (14.1)                     | 19 (12.1)           | 46 (16.6)             |
| Comorbidities                          |                   |                     |                        |                                |                     |                        |                                |                     |                        |
| Diabetes                               | 96 (39.2) ‡       | 219 (22.3) ‡        | 93 (38.8) ‡            | 218 (22.5) ‡                   | 57 (36.3)           | 83 (30.0)             |
| Hypertension                           | 164 (66.9) ‡      | 553 (56.4) ‡        | 161 (67.1)             | 548 (56.4) ‡                   | 104 (66.2)          | 176 (63.5)            |
| Chronic kidney disease                 | 72 (29.4) ‡       | 199 (20.3) ‡        | 70 (29.2) ‡            | 197 (20.3) ‡                   | 48 (30.6)           | 71 (25.6)             |
| Heart Failure | 5 (2.0) | 8 (0.8) | 5 (2.1) | 8 (0.8) | 3 (1.9) | 3 (1.1) |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Familial hypercholesterolemia | 65 (26.5) ‡ | 11 (1.1) ‡ | 60 (25.0) ‡ | 2 (0.2) ‡ | 45 (28.7) ‡ | 0 (0.0) ‡ |
| Very high-risk for ASCVD events* | 2 (0.8) ‡ | 1 (0.1) ‡ | 2 (0.8) ‡ | 1 (0.1) ‡ | 2 (1.3) | 0 (0.0) |
| Statin use | | | | | | |
| Never | 18 (7.3) ‡ | 194 (19.8) ‡ | 18 (7.5) ‡ | 188 (19.4) ‡ | 9 (5.7) ‡ | 33 (11.9) ‡ |
| Former | 156 (63.7) ‡ | 457 (46.6) ‡ | 152 (63.3) ‡ | 456 (47.0) ‡ | 94 (59.9) ‡ | 141 (50.9) ‡ |
| Current - Low intensity | 11 (4.5) ‡ | 18 (1.8) ‡ | 11 (4.6) ‡ | 18 (1.9) ‡ | 9 (5.7) ‡ | 6 (2.2) ‡ |
| Current - Moderate-high intensity | 60 (24.5) ‡ | 311 (31.7) ‡ | 59 (24.6) ‡ | 309 (31.8) ‡ | 45 (28.7) ‡ | 97 (35.0) ‡ |
| Use of ezetimibe | | | | | | |
| Never or Former | 153 (62.4) ‡ | 972 (99.2) ‡ | 148 (61.7) ‡ | 963 (99.2) ‡ | 92 (58.6) ‡ | 273 (98.6) ‡ |
| Current | 92 (37.6) ‡ | 8 (0.8) ‡ | 92 (38.3) ‡ | 8 (0.8) ‡ | 65 (41.4) ‡ | 4 (1.4) ‡ |
| LDL-C (mg/dL), median (IQR) | 183.3 (159.0, 205.0) ‡ | 150.9 (124.4, 178.6) ‡ | 184.0 (159.0, 205.0) ‡ | 151.0 (124.6, 179.0) ‡ | 192.2 (163.0, 211.2) ‡ | 154.0 (126.0, 183.0) ‡ |
| LDL-C category, mg/dL | | | | | | |
| 100 to <130 | 18 (7.3) ‡ | 299 (30.5) ‡ | 17 (7.1) ‡ | 296 (30.5) ‡ | 9 (5.7) ‡ | 79 (28.5) ‡ |
| 130 to <190 | 119 (48.6) ‡ | 513 (52.3) ‡ | 115 (47.9) ‡ | 507 (52.2) ‡ | 64 (40.8) ‡ | 149 (53.8) ‡ |
| ≥190 | 108 (44.1) ‡ | 168 (17.1) ‡ | 108 (45.0) ‡ | 168 (17.3) ‡ | 84 (53.5) ‡ | 49 (17.7) ‡ |

Numbers are expressed as number (percentage) unless otherwise indicated.
ASCVD: atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease; CHD: coronary heart disease; IQR: interquartile range; LDL-C: low density lipoprotein cholesterol; PAD: peripheral artery disease; PCSK9: Proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9; SD: standard deviation; VISN: Veterans Integrated Service Network
* Defined as a history of multiple major ASCVD events or 1 major ASCVD event and multiple high-risk conditions based on the presence of at least one of the following: age ≥ 65 years, heterozygous familial hypercholesterolemia, history of prior coronary artery bypass surgery or percutaneous coronary intervention outside of the major ASCVD event(s), diabetes, hypertension, chronic kidney disease (eGFR 15-59 mL/min/1.73m2), current smoking, LDL-C ≥ 100 mg/dL despite maximally tolerated statin therapy and ezetimibe, or congestive heart failure.
† Not calculated due to low frequency or inclusion of variable in definition of subgroup.
‡ P value <0.05 for comparison between initiators and non-initiators.
Table S6. Odds ratios for initiating a PCSK9 inhibitor associated with patient characteristics among Veterans in the severe hypercholesterolemia cohort in subgroups.

| Characteristics                  | Any LDL-C ≥190 mg/dL | Any LDL-C ≥220 mg/dL |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|                                  | N, initiators / non-initiators | 157/275            |
|                                  | 240/971               |                       |
| Age category, years              |                       |                       |
| <65                              | 1 (Ref)               | 1 (Ref)               |
| 65 to <75                        | 1.52 (0.81, 2.86)     | 0.07 (0.00, 1.42)     |
| >=75                             | 2.98 (1.08, 8.22)     | 0.19 (0.00, 13.12)    |
| Female                           | 1.84 (0.94, 3.62)     | 4.41 (0.31, 62.10)    |
| Race-Ethnicity                   |                       |                       |
| Non-Hispanic, White              | 1 (Ref)               | 1 (Ref)               |
| Non-Hispanic, Black              | 0.80 (0.42, 1.52)     | 0.15 (0.01, 1.58)     |
| Asian                            | 0.15 (0.00, 8.35)     | Undefined             |
| Hispanic                         | 0.30 (0.09, 1.06)     | 0.07 (0.00, 3.99)     |
| Other                            | 0.88 (0.10, 8.09)     | 5.45 (0.00, 1.9057E8) |
| Median area-level income         |                       |                       |
| Q1 ($0 - $43,173)                | 1 (Ref)               | 1 (Ref)               |
| Q2 ($43,264 - $51,738)           | 0.44 (0.19, 1.03)     | 0.05 (0.00, 1.45)     |
| Q3 ($51,740 - $66,333)           | 1.16 (0.54, 2.49)     | 0.38 (0.03, 4.45)     |
| Q4 ($66,359 - $174,205)          | 0.88 (0.40, 1.92)     | 0.10 (0.01, 1.76)     |
| Health insurance                 |                       |                       |
| No                               | 1 (Ref)               | 1 (Ref)               |
| Yes                              | 0.89 (0.50, 1.57)     | 2.72 (0.30, 24.28)    |
| Priority group                   |                       |                       |
| 1                                | 1 (Ref)               | 1 (Ref)               |
| 2 to 8                           | 0.91 (0.52, 1.60)     | 8.12 (0.70, 93.60)    |
| VISN region                      |                       |                       |
| Northeast                        | 1 (Ref)               | 1 (Ref)               |
| Southeast                        | 0.92 (0.46, 1.87)     | 1.44 (0.12, 16.82)    |
| Continental                      | 0.59 (0.26, 1.34)     | 0.31 (0.02, 4.05)     |
| Pacific                          | 0.53 (0.23, 1.22)     | 11.91 (0.39, 366.31)  |
| Smoking status                   |                       |                       |
| Never/former                     | 1 (Ref)               | 1 (Ref)               |
| Current                          | 0.82 (0.37, 1.82)     | 2.08 (0.18, 23.66)    |
| Comorbidities                    |                       |                       |
| Diabetes                         | 1.65 (0.93, 2.91)     | 3.50 (0.51, 23.90)    |
| Hypertension                     | 1.21 (0.68, 2.16)     | 2.84 (0.33, 24.85)    |
| Chronic kidney disease           | 2.11 (1.14, 3.91)     | 0.72 (0.09, 5.58)     |
| Heart failure                    | 1.70 (0.22, 13.09)    | 375.01 (0.19, 723852.2) |
| Familial hypercholestelemia     | 848.27 (68.12, 10562.53) | Undefined         |
| Statin use                       |                       |                       |
| Never                            | 1 (Ref)               | 1 (Ref)               |
| Former                           | 3.31 (1.50, 7.32)     | 2.18 (0.07, 72.29)    |
| Current - Low intensity          | 4.90 (0.60, 40.43)    | 8.10 (0.03, 1934.27)  |
| Use of ezetimibe | Current - Moderate-high intensity | Current - High intensity |
|------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Never or Former  | 1 (Ref)                         | 1 (Ref)                 |
| Current          | 79.95 (26.53, 240.92)           | 485.23 (16.21, 14521.98) |

| LDL-c category, mg/dL | Current - Moderate-high intensity | Current - High intensity |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 100 to <130           | 1 (Ref)                         | 1 (Ref)                 |
| 130 to <190           | 3.66 (1.54, 8.66)               | 14.34 (1.02, 202.09)    |
| ≥190                  | 21.70 (8.34, 56.44)             | 1456.56 (8.77, 241873.7) |

All models adjusted for all variables in left-hand side of table.

ASCVD: atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease; CHD: coronary heart disease; LDL-C: low density lipoprotein cholesterol; PAD: peripheral artery disease; PCSK9: proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9; VISN: Veterans Integrated Service Network

* Not calculated due to low frequency or inclusion of variable in definition of subgroup.
Figure S1. Flow-chart showing the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria for initiators of a PCSK9 inhibitor in the Veterans Health Administration.

Veterans with first ever fill for a PCSK9 inhibitor between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2019
\[ N = 3,281^* \]

Did not meet continuous enrollment criteria
\[ N = 120 \]

Initiators with continuous enrollment
\[ N = 3,161^† \]

Did not meet cohort entry criteria
\[ N = 159 \]

Initiators alive on the index date and without multiple death dates
\[ N = 3,002‡ \]

Did not meet cohort entry criteria
\[ N = 363 \]

Initiators in the ASCVD Cohort
\[ N = 245 \]

Initiators in the severe hypercholesterolemia Cohort
\[ N = 2,394 \]

*Veterans with a fill for a PCSK9i before January 1, 2018 were excluded.
† Continuous enrollment is defined as at least one outpatient or inpatient encounter in both the first and last 6 months of the one-year pre-index period.
‡ For each Veteran who initiated a PCSK9i between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2019, the index date was defined as the date of their earliest PCSK9i fill between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2019.

ASCVD: Atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, PCSK9i: Proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9 inhibitors.

Veterans who initiated a PCSK9i between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2019 were matched 1:4 to Veterans who did not have a fill for a PCSK9i on or before December 31, 2019 (i.e., non-initiators). For each non-initiator, an index date was randomly selected within the calendar quarter corresponding to their matched initiator’s index date.
Figure S2. Distribution of most recent LDL-C levels in the one-year pre-index period among PCSK9 inhibitor initiators and non-initiators among Veterans in the ASCVD cohort, by subgroup.

We used LDL-C measurements within 365 days before each Veteran's index date, inclusive. For Veterans with multiple LDL-C measurements during this time period, we used the one closest to their index date (i.e., the most recent). With CHD (Panel A), with cerebrovascular disease (Panel B), with PAD (Panel C), with very high-risk for ASCVD (Panel D), taking moderate or high intensity statin (Panel E), or taking ezetimibe (Panel F). ASCVD: atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease; CHD: coronary heart disease; LDL-C: low density lipoprotein cholesterol; PAD: peripheral artery disease; PCSK9: proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9.
Figure S3. Distribution of most recent LDL-C levels in the one-year pre-index period among PCSK9 inhibitor initiators and non-initiators among Veterans in the severe hypercholesterolemia cohort, by subgroup.

We used LDL-C measurements within 365 days before each Veteran’s index date, inclusive. For Veterans with multiple LDL-C measurements during this time period, we used the one closest to their index date (i.e., the most recent). Caption: With any prior LDL-C ≥190 mg/dL (Panel A), or with any prior LDL-C ≥220 mg/dL (Panel B). Legend: ASCVD: atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease; LDL-C: low density lipoprotein cholesterol; PCSK9: proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9.