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This is the author's manuscript

Original Citation:

Availability:

This version is available <http://hdl.handle.net/2318/1652055> since 2018-02-08T16:56:39Z

Published version:

DOI:10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.117.028217

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UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TORINO

This is an author version of the contribution published on:

Questa è la versione dell'autore dell'opera:

Circulation, 136 (16), 2017, DOI: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.117.028217

The definitive version is available at:

La versione definitiva è disponibile alla URL:

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**Letter by Musso et al Regarding Article, "Cardiac Outcomes After
Ischemic Stroke or Transient Ischemic Attack: Effects of Pioglitazone in
Patients With Insulin Resistance Without Diabetes Mellitus"**

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KEY WORDS: pioglitazone, advanced fibrosis, fibrosis, NAFLD

To the Editor

we read with interest the article by Young et al¹, reporting a secondary analysis of the results from the Insulin Resistance Intervention after Stroke(IRIS) trial, reporting the effects of pioglitazone on cardiac outcomes after Ischemic Stroke or TIA in nondiabetic insulin resistant patients with prior acute cerebrovascular disease.

Notably, the IRIS is the first trial showing that a drug reduced the risk of diabetes² while simultaneously decreasing cardiovascular disease. As insulin resistance is not a disease entity but a condition predisposing to other diseases and pioglitazone does have unwanted effects, an important challenge will be to identify which insulin resistant nondiabetic patients would benefit most from this drug, in order to limit pioglitazone exposure to the subgroup at higher cardio-metabolic risk.

In the IRIS trial, the benefit of pioglitazone was more remarkable in patients with more pronounced metabolic derangement, like those with metabolic syndrome². We recently observed similar, prominent benefits of pioglitazone on liver disease in nondiabetic patients with nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH), in whom this drug reversed steatohepatitis and, unique among all drugs evaluated in NASH to date, also advanced hepatic fibrosis³. NASH is the most common chronic liver disease in the world, is the hepatic manifestation of metabolic syndrome and may predispose to both diabetes and cardiovascular disease via different pathogenic mechanisms⁴. Hence, it would be important to assess if the presence of NASH (as assessed by liver enzyme elevation and/or abdomen ultrasound) identified those patients who had most benefit from pioglitazone with respect to their cardio-metabolic risk in the IRIS trial, similar to what has been observed with statins in the Greek Atorvastatin and Coronary Heart Disease Evaluation(GREACE) Study⁵.

Disclosures

No author has any present or past conflict of interest to disclose

1 Young LH, Viscoli CM, Curtis JP, Inzucchi SE, Schwartz GG, Lovejoy AM, Furie KL, Gorman MJ, Conwit RA, Abbott JD, Jacoby DL, Kolansky DM, Pfau SE, Ling FS, Kernan WN; IRIS Investigators. Cardiac Outcomes After Ischemic Stroke or TIA: Effects of Pioglitazone in Patients with Insulin Resistance Without Diabetes. *Circulation*. 2017 Feb 28. pii: CIRCULATIONAHA.116.024863. doi: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.116.024863. [Epub ahead of print]

2 Inzucchi SE, Viscoli CM, Young LH, Furie KL, Gorman M, Lovejoy AM, Dagogo-Jack S, Ismail-Beigi F, Korytkowski MT, Pratley RE, Schwartz GG, Kernan WN . Pioglitazone Prevents Diabetes in Patients With Insulin Resistance and Cerebrovascular Disease. *Diabetes Care*. 2016 Oct;39(10):1684-92. doi: 10.2337/dc16-0798. Epub 2016 Jul 27.

3 Musso G, Cassader M, Paschetta E, Gambino R. Thiazolidinediones and Advanced Liver Fibrosis in Nonalcoholic Steatohepatitis: A Meta-analysis. *JAMA Intern Med*. 2017 Feb 27. doi: 10.1001/jamainternmed.2016.9607

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5 Athyros VG, Tziomalos K, Gossios TD, Griva T, Anagnostis P, Kargiotis K, Pagourelis ED, Theocharidou E, Karagiannis A, Mikhailidis DP; Safety and efficacy of long-term statin treatment for cardiovascular events in patients with coronary heart disease and abnormal liver tests in the Greek Atorvastatin and Coronary Heart Disease Evaluation (GREACE) Study: a post-hoc analysis. *Lancet*. 2010;376:1916-22.