

IN REPLY:

Thank you to Drs. Polinski and Gagne for their comments on our article in the November 2008 issue of the *Journal*.¹

Polinski and Gagne noted that patients who did not fill more than 1 lipid-lowering (LL) drug may be less persistent. Although we agree that these patients may have been less persistent depending on days' supply of the first prescription, we must also point out that these patients would have the highest medication possession ratio of 1. Our study excluded 326 patients with 1 LL drug filled throughout the study period. This exclusion only affected group 2, since those in group 1 by definition had to have at least 2 prescription claims with 2 different regimens. We ran a post hoc analysis including the 326 patients in group 2 and found that medication burden was still positively associated with persistence.

We would like to clarify our definition of medication burden, which is defined as the number of unique drug products. The managed care organization allows a 90-day supply for those drugs that they define as chronic drug therapies. Any prescription for a chronic medication was counted in our study, regardless of the days' supply as long as it overlapped with the index date.

Our study may not apply to all populations. However, the clinician is often faced with adding additional therapies to

existing regimens. In patients with hypertension with an average medication burden of 2.9 chronic medications, adding LL therapy did not affect persistence.

Teisha A. Robertson, PharmD, MBA

Catherine E. Cooke, PharmD, BCPS

Jingshu J. Wang, PhD

Fadia T. Shaya, PhD, MPH

School of Pharmacy

University of Maryland

Baltimore, MD

Helen Y. Lee, PharmD, MBA

CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield

Baltimore, MD

Funding Source: None reported.

Author Disclosure: The authors (TAR, JW, FTS, HYL) report no relationship or financial interest with any entity that would pose a conflict of interest with the subject matter of this article. Dr Cooke is a former employee of Pfizer, Inc, and reports owning stock in that company.

Address correspondence to: Teisha A. Robertson, PharmD, MBA, PO Box 6893, Largo, MD 20774. E-mail: ttay1002@umaryland.edu.

Reference

1. **Robertson TA, Cooke CE, Wang J, Shaya FT, Lee HY.** Effect of medication burden on persistent use of lipid-lowering drugs among patients with hypertension. *Am J Manag Care.* 2008;14(11):710-716. ■