

## First Quick Nugget: The <200 Cholesterol Story

Dear Colleague!

Here's the very first **“Quick Nugget”**! What is it? **One single, bite-sized insight for Family Doctors.** An additional email, in-between the main “Golden Nuggets of Family Medicine”. I hope you enjoy and benefit from it!

### The Story Behind the 200 Cholesterol Limit

- **1929:** Lipoproteins were discovered by [Michel Macheboeuf](#).
- **1960s and 1970s:** High blood pressure and high cholesterol were identified as major CVD risk factors, especially by the [Framingham Heart Study](#).
- **1985:** The National Cholesterol Education Program was launched and tasked the Adult Treatment Panel to develop guidelines.
- **1987:** The [first commercial statin](#) (lovastatin) was approved by FDA.
- **1988:** The [Adult Treatment Panel](#) defined **“desirable cholesterol”** as <200 mg/dL (and high cholesterol as >240).

### Why the 200 Limit?

- It was based on **observational data**, rather than on today's RCT evidence.
- It was defined **“[somewhat arbitrarily](#)”** according to the 1988 panel itself.
- Today we know more. But guidelines change slowly and defining something **“first”** and **“simple”** can trump new knowledge.

### Why is this important?

- Defining a disease by 200 or 240 mg/dL makes a huge difference. In the USA alone, this accounted for [42 million](#) new patients (a doubling). This expansion of disease definitions and pharmaceutical markets is called [disease mongering](#).

- Since the era of statins, financial conflicts of interests increased. The Adult Treatment Panel of 2004 was criticized because 8 of its 9 authors had financial ties to statin manufacturers. That distorts science and harms public trust.

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