

Plain English summary of the final results of the REstart or STop Antithrombotics Randomised Trial



Why did we do RESTART?

More than one-third of people who've survived brain haemorrhage stop taking oral anti-blood-clotting drugs, like aspirin. Normally taken to prevent blood vessel blockage, so-called antiplatelet drugs increase the risk of bleeding in general. So they're widely believed to increase the risk of brain haemorrhage happening again.

What was RESTART?

RESTART was a randomised trial involving 537 survivors of brain haemorrhage in the UK. Participants were mostly men over the age of 70; all had a history of diseases that cause blockage of blood flow due to clotting but had stopped taking oral antiplatelet drugs after their brain haemorrhage.

RESTART split the participants into two groups: half were encouraged to start antiplatelet drugs, and half were encouraged to stay off these drugs.

Over the course of 7 years, we kept track of everyone to learn how they got on and who had recurrent bleeding or any major event involving the blockage of blood flow, like stroke or heart attack.

What did the main results of RESTART show?

Please visit www.RESTARTtrial.org to view a 2-minute video and a link to the paper in *JAMA Neurology*. Meantime, here is a summary:

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- 22 of 268 participants who started an antiplatelet drug had another brain haemorrhage compared with 25 of 268 participants who avoided these drugs.
- Overall, 72 of 268 participants who started an antiplatelet drug had a major event involving bleeding or blockage of blood flow, compared with 87 of 268 participants who avoided these drugs.
- Those findings are consistent with the known effects of antiplatelet drugs.
- It looks like the risk of antiplatelet drugs might be too small to exceed the established benefits of these drugs for preventing heart attacks and strokes.
- These promising findings should be investigated in larger trials to be sure about the effects of antiplatelet drugs for people with brain haemorrhage.

What does this mean for me?

The final results of ReSTART are not conclusive, although they are encouraging. They do not have immediate implications for whether you should continue or avoid an antiplatelet drug. You could discuss whether you want to make any changes to your medicines with your consultant or GP, who should be aware of these results.