

METHODS NOTE · Peer-reviewed · Published

The PLATO trial - was it too good to be true?

Daniel Coles

Methods Note · Volume 6

Published 2026-06-06 · Diamond open access · CC BY 4.0

Article 27 · Volume 6 · Published 2026-06-06 · DOI: not assigned

KEY WORDS Ticagrelor; Validity

Abstract

The PLATO trial was the sole reason Ticagrelor was established in the US, reporting a 16% reduction in cardiovascular death, myocardial infarction and strokes across 18,624 patients in 43 countries. However, methodological concerns- including regional discrepancies, independent monitoring inconsistencies, and data irregularities- raise questions about its validity. Notably, North American patients experienced worse outcomes with ticagrelor, and subsequent trials failed to replicate PLATO's benefits.

A 2025 meta-analysis showed pooled ticagrelor effects are largely driven by PLATO, suggesting guideline recommendations may require reevaluation. Future meta-analyses may benefit from excluding this trial from their selection.

HOW TO CITE

Daniel Coles. The PLATO trial - was it too good to be true?. Syn̄thesis. 2026;6(1). Article 27. Available at <https://synthesis-medicine.org/index.php/journal/article/view/27>. Licensed under CC BY 4.0. DOI: not assigned.

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Published in Syn̄thesis · synthesis-medicine.org