2026 Areas of Interest for Atherosclerosis

Atherosclerosis Areas of Interest

Effective January 2026, the Merck Investigator Studies Program Review Committee (MISP-RC) for Atherosclerosis will accept CLINICAL (NON-INTERVENTIONAL) submissions within our current areas of interest (AOI). This is a competitive review process that will be conducted by the MISP Review Committee.

The following areas are of interest to the Investigator Studies Program Committee:

Implementation Studies (focus on implementation with use of validated tools):

- Studies evaluating approaches to improve use of Guideline Directed Medical Therapy by HCPs (specialty or primary care) or coordinated care models to improve adoption, adherence and persistence to lipid-lowering therapies, including approved PCSK9 inhibitors
    - Including interventional studies, educational approaches and, quality improvement programs
    - Including studies that focus at a Health System level or those that target specific populations
- Studies evaluating approaches to improve LDL-C goal attainment

Epidemiology and Patient Characterization:

- Studies that advance the understanding ofPCSK9i in:
    - Coronary atherosclerosis, including CAD, ACS/post-MI, coronary arterial revascularization (PCI, CABG, etc.)
    - Cerebrovascular atherosclerosis such as stroke or TIA, cerebrovascular revascularization, carotid endarterectomy
    - Other comorbid conditions including diabetes, obesity, heart failure, CKM, renal disease, HIV
    - Heterozygous Familial Hypercholesterolemia (HeFH)
    - Peripheral arterial disease, including symptomatic PAD, acute or chronic limb ischemia, lower extremity arterial revascularization, amputation, etc.
    - High risk for ASCVD/subclinical atherosclerosis such as high plaque burden, CAC, or Lp(a)
    - Benefits of combination therapies (statin or otherwise) with PCSK9i
    - PCSK9i-driven outcomes in various subpopulations, including those with

and without a history of ASCVD (CAD, CBV, PAD), diabetes, CKD, in various race/ethnicity/age groups.
    - Therapy administration and delivery preferences and potential outcomes
- Studies evaluating cumulative LDL-C risk assessment, implementation, and clinical impact
- Disparities in LDL-C management and/or CVOs, disposition:
    - Across specific patient populations
    - In typically under-diagnosed/treated populations, including women
- Evaluation of the PCSK9 protein in atherosclerosis pathways