

## Newsletter- Comment (April 2012)

Every couple of years the New Zealand Listener<sup>1</sup> publishes an (appropriately) alarmist article about the state of cardiovascular health in New Zealand. The latest "Heart Disease in New Zealand" by Rebecca McFie (30 March 2012) gives an updated plug for the NZ Cardiovascular Risk Guideline. The latest iteration is in the New Zealand Primary Care Handbook February 2012<sup>2</sup>.

I repeat the admonitions that I have given frequently in this website (GP Tips 15 and 17, and Newsletter-Comments May 2009, December 2009, July 2010 and June 2011) that the NZ Cardiovascular Risk Guideline is plainly wrong in the advice it gives about basing decisions about pharmacological therapy around a 15% 5-year cardiovascular risk threshold. This clearly discriminates against younger people with high blood pressure or dyslipidaemia who have a low 5-year cardiovascular risk but a high long term (lifetime) risk<sup>3</sup>.

Look at my latest GP Tip (Tip 19 – April 2012);- an otherwise well 30-year old man with a sustained blood pressure of 150/90. The Primary Care Handbook says you don't treat his blood pressure pharmacologically (what...wait until he presents aged 45 with malignant hypertension, a stroke, or renal failure???) . I say you are negligent if you do not treat him.

1. <http://www.listener.co.nz/>
2. [http://nzgg.org.nz/search?clinical\\_area\\_id=248&resource\\_type=Guideline+summary](http://nzgg.org.nz/search?clinical_area_id=248&resource_type=Guideline+summary)
3. Marma AK et al Circ Cardiovasc Qual Outcomes 2010;3:8-14