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It's Not a Magic Pill, but It's Pretty Close

An interview with **Population Health Research Institute** researchers:
Jackie Bosch, Occupational Therapist
and **Salim Yusuf**, Cardiologist, Executive Director

Jackie Bosch

A polypill. If I said to you we took a bunch of pills and put them in one, you'd say, well why would you do that? Cardiovascular risk factors track. That means people who have high blood pressure tend to have elevated cholesterol, or a little bit elevated cholesterol. They tend to have issues with their blood. So they tend to take a variety of medications.

When people are asked to take multiple medications, certain things happen. Number one, they might not get all the medications they need. The second thing is, who wants to take a handful of drugs every morning and some more at night? One drug, once a day, with all of it in it, is much more effective at getting the drugs where they need to be.

Salim Yusuf

We've worked with a company to produce a combination pill: three blood pressure lowering agents, a statin, and if needs be, an aspirin as well. It's a 4-in-1 pill or a 5-in-1 pill. It is true that it's a very simple concept, but the reason why it hasn't existed was that different companies manufacture different drugs. So they don't really talk to each other, especially during the time when the drug is still on patent.



There is relatively little incentive to do the research, to make combination therapies, because they are generics and the revenues are relatively modest. This is almost a no brainer. It should be done, and it'll have a big impact.

What is the TIPS study?

Jackie Bosch

TIPS is the polypill study, if we can show that a polypill works in areas where poly pills are most needed. The interesting thing about a polypill is once the drugs go generic, it becomes extremely inexpensive to create, and therefore people who never had access to drugs before can actually obtain these medications. So we're running that study in places like India, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesian Tunisia, Malaysia, because we think that these are the places that will benefit the most, and the people who may benefit the most.