

Hypertension: management of adults in primary care

PHARMACOLOGICAL UPDATE

Developed by the National Collaborating Centre for Chronic Conditions at the Royal College of Physicians

Hypertension (persistently high blood pressure) is a major factor contributing to cardiovascular diseases such as stroke and coronary heart disease, but one which can be modified by lifestyle and pharmacological interventions. A 2004 NICE guideline gave recommendations and supporting evidence for the management of hypertension in primary care in adults with no obvious underlying disease (essential hypertension). Its aim was to lower subsequent cardiovascular disease and death caused by stroke and coronary heart disease.

This pharmacological update of the 2004 guideline has been undertaken because recent large head-to-head trials have provided new information about the use of blood pressure-lowering drugs in line with the new evidence, specifically the first choice of drugs for initial therapy. Hypertensive drugs aim to reduce blood pressure to an acceptable level, thus lowering patients' risk of cardiovascular disease and death.

The work was undertaken by the National Collaborating Centre for Chronic Conditions with the aims of incorporating new information into the NICE guideline, and to collaborate with the British Hypertension Society to produce new joint advice for primary care prescribers in the NHS.

A pharmacological update of *NICE Clinical Guideline 18* (published August 2004, see www.nice.org.uk/CG018). The recommendations in this update replace the recommendations on pharmacological interventions for hypertension (section 1.4 of the original NICE guideline, pp103–139). No other recommendations are affected.

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