Generic Antihypertensives: Safe, Effective, and Affordable

Although there are many generic alternatives in the antihypertensive medication class (Calcium Channel Blockers, Beta Blockers, and Angiotensive Converting Enzyme Inhibitors), high-cost brand name medications continue to be prescribed frequently. For patients requiring an antihypertensive, consider prescribing an equally safe, effective and lower-cost generic option.

Generic Calcium Channel Blockers (CCBs): Safe and Effective

CCBs are approved for and have been shown to be effective in lowering blood pressure. However, no studies have compared the effectiveness and safety of one CCB with another in terms of their history in reducing the risk of heart attack or stroke in people with high blood pressure. 1,2

Most studies suggest that on average, patient response to various CCBs (when taken to lower blood pressure) does not differ substantially.

The market share of brand Norvasc® (amlodipine) grew to an all-time high of 47.2 percent in 2004. There is no clear evidence that Norvasc is superior to other medications in the setting of heart failure, hypertension and other indications.2

Affordable

Consumer Reports1 selected four Best Buy CCBs for high blood pressure (based primarily on cost and dosing convenience):Diltiazem SR and Diltiazem CR, Felodipine SR, Nifedipine SR, Verapamil SR.

Average Cost Per Month Brand vs. Generic CCBs

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Norvasc 10mg</th>
<th>Felodipine SR 10mg</th>
<th>Verapamil SR 240mg</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average cost</td>
<td>$74</td>
<td>$46</td>
<td>$25</td>
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▲ Average cost/month: 3/06 Medispan (average wholesale price for brands and approximate discounted reimbursement rate for generic and OTC)

Generic Beta Blockers

Safe and Effective

Clinical evidence has shown that beta blockers are effective in the treatment of hypertension and there is no proven difference in safety or side effects between brand and generic beta blockers. 1a,3

Various studies have shown that Toprol XL® offers no advantage over atenolol with regard to safety, efficacy, and overall quality of life.4,6

Continued on back.
Affordable

Consumer Reports selected three Best Buy beta blockers for high blood pressure (based primarily on efficacy, safety and cost): metoprolol tartrate, nadolol and propranolol.

Generic Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitors (ACE) and Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers (ARB) Options:
Safe and Effective

- There are no data that suggests one ACE or ARB is superior to another for effectiveness or safety.\(^7,8\)
- ACE inhibitors have been shown to improve cardiovascular outcomes in high risk patients with or without hypertension in the HOPE and PROGRESS trials.\(^9,10\)
- According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), all patients with diabetes and hypertension should be treated with a regimen that includes either an ACE or an ARB. If one class is not well tolerated, the other should be substituted.
- The ADA also notes that in patients with congestive heart disease, ACEs are recommended in patients older than age 55, with or without hypertension, but with another cardiovascular risk factor to reduce cardiovascular events.\(^11\)
- In patients with Type 2 diabetes, hypertension and microalbuminurea, ACEs and ARBs have been shown to decrease the progression to macroalbuminurea.\(^11\)

Affordable

**ACE:** Consumer Reports selected three Best Buy Ace-inhibitors for high blood pressure (based primarily on efficacy, safety and cost): benazepril, enalapril and lisinopril.

**ARBs:** No generics available. ARB’s should be used only after intolerance to ACE has been demonstrated.
Ace Inhibitors/ARB – Average Cost per Month

If you have any questions about this information, please call the FLRx Drug Information Service line at 1-877-777-2737 or email your questions to myrxconnection@FLRx.com.

References