String of **PEARLS**

Practical Evidence About Real Life Situations

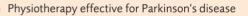
about neurology

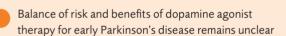
PEARLS are succinct summaries of Cochrane Systematic Reviews for primary care practitioners—developed by Prof. Brian McAvoy for the Cochrane Primary Care Field (www.cochraneprimarycare.org), New Zealand Branch of the Australasian Cochrane Centre at the Department of General Practice and Primary Health Care, University of Auckland (www.auckland.ac.nz/uoa), funded by the Ministry of Health (www. health.govt.nz), and published in NZ Doctor (www.nzdoctor.co.nz.).

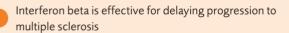


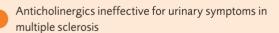
Bromocriptine is effective in early Parkinson's disease

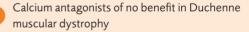












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Antihypertensive drugs for mild hypertension: questionable benefits

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THE PROBLEM: Hypertension and associated cardiovascular disease can pose significant risk to patients; however, 60% of patients treated with antihypertensive drugs have mild hypertension (systolic blood pressure [BP] 140-159 mm Hg and/or diastolic BP 90-99 mm Hg) and no cardiovascular disease. Data from studies that examine the benefits of these drugs in those with moderate or severe hypertension have often been extrapolated to the patient group as a whole. Recently, it has been questioned whether treating patients who have mild hypertension with antihypertensive drugs is appropriate, considering the proven potential harms (hip fracture, drug-related hospital admissions, and poor self-rated physical and mental health).1

CLINICAL BOTTOM LINE: Antihypertensive drugs used in the treatment of patients without a previous cardiovascular event (primary prevention) with mild hypertension do not significantly reduce mortality, cardiovascular events, coronary heart disease, or stroke. To put this in perspective, 400 people would have to be treated for five years to prevent one death, 128 people would have to be treated for five years to prevent one cardiovascular event, and there is a near 1 in 10 chance of an adverse effect. Therefore, non-drug, lifestyle treatments, such as diet, exercise and stress management advice should be considered for those with mild hypertension.

Antihypertensive drugs for the treatment of mild hypertension

	Success	Evidence	Harms
Reduction in mortality	No significant difference to no treatment	Cochrane review ²	9% chance of an adverse effect that would require
Reduction in stroke, CHD and cardio- vascular events	No significant difference to no treatment		withdrawal from treatment

CHD Coronary heart disease

References

- 1. Martin SA, Boucher M, Wright JM, Saini V. Mild hypertension in people at low risk. BMJ. 2014;349:g5432.
- 2. Diao D, Wright JM, Cundiff DK, Gueyffier F. Pharmacotherapy for mild hypertension. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2012;(8):CD006742.

All people residing in New Zealand have access to the Cochrane Library via the Ministry website www.health.govt.nz/cochrane-library