

Summary:

Calcium channel blockers are not recommended as a first line antihypertensive treatment due to their association with ischemic heart events, the results of ALLHAT, and their lack of outcomes data on beneficial effects with long-term use. However, based on JNC-VII that was published in 2003, calcium channel blockers (CCBs) are among the drugs recommended as initial therapy for patients with ischemic heart disease, and long-acting CCBs are among the drugs recommended as initial therapy for patients with diabetes. Verapamil and diltiazem are non-dihydropyridine calcium channel blockers that are generically available. Among the dihydropyridine calcium channel blockers, sustained-release nifedipine, immediate-release nifedipine, immediate-release nicardipine, immediate-release isradipine, felodipine, nimodipine, and amlodipine are available as generics. Selection of agents for the preferred drug list should be based upon FDA indications, generic availability, efficacy, and safety.