



Effective Health Care

Generic vs. Brand Name Antiepileptic Drugs Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- Generic versus brand name antiepileptic drugs for the treatment of epilepsy will be addressed as part of a larger in-process systematic review on treatment of epilepsy that is currently in refinement. The scope of this topic, including populations, interventions, comparators, and outcomes, will be further developed during the refinement process of the review.
- When key questions have been drafted, they will be posted on the AHRQ Web site and open for public comment. To sign up for notification when this and other EHC Program topics are posted for public comment, please go to <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/join-the-email-list1/>.

Topic Description

Nominator: Individual

Nomination Summary: The nominator is interested in the use of generic medications for the treatment of seizures. The nominator states, "For many years most neurologists have insisted that there are issues with generic seizure medications. There is little evidence to support this notion. However their professional society has publicly come out against the substitution of 'A' rated generics, and neurologists use a large amount of brand drugs for treatment of these disorders. In addition, many states include these drugs in their narrow therapeutic index laws. This results in a large amount of potentially unnecessary healthcare costs/spending that is not evidence based and may be unnecessary."

Population(s): All patients with seizures stratified by seizure type

Intervention(s): Brand name antiepileptic drugs

Comparator(s): Generic antiepileptic drugs

Outcome(s): Seizure control, emergency department visits, cost, and hospitalization

Key Questions from Nominator: 1. Does the use of generic medications for seizures result in poorer control, more emergency department visits, and/or increased rates of hospitalization than the use of brand name medications?

Considerations

- The topic meets EHC Program appropriateness and importance criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)

- Pharmacotherapy with antiepileptic drugs is the mainstay of treatment for epilepsy, but more than one-third of people with epilepsy continue to have seizures despite treatment. The EHC Program has initiated a systematic review of epilepsy treatment which will include the issue of generic versus name brand antiepileptic drugs.