

# DTB CME/CPD Answers



Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin

## What role for capsaicin in diabetic peripheral neuropathy?

### Question 1

Peripheral neuropathy is a common long-term complication of diabetes mellitus. How many people with diabetic neuropathy are thought to be affected by pain?

- a. 10–20%
- b. 20–30%
- c. 30–40%
- d. 40–50%**
- e. 50–60%

**Answer: d.** Pain affects 10–20% of patients with diabetes and 40–50% of patients with diabetic neuropathy.

### Question 3

In a systematic review and meta-analysis of drug treatments for neuropathic pain from different causes, how many people needed to be treated with the capsaicin patch for one person to experience improvement in pain?

- a. 3
- b. 7
- c. 11**
- d. 15
- e. 19

**Answer: c.** A recent systematic review and meta-analysis of data from published and unpublished randomised double-blind placebo-controlled trials of drug treatments in adults with neuropathic pain from a variety of causes estimated the number-needed-to-treat for capsaicin patches as 11 (compared with 6 for drugs such as duloxetine, 7 for gabapentin and 8 for pregabalin).

### Question 2

According to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), which one of the following is not a recommended first-line option for the treatment of painful diabetic peripheral neuropathy in a non-specialist setting?

- a. duloxetine
- b. venlafaxine**
- c. amitriptyline
- d. pregabalin
- e. gabapentin

**Answer: b.** For the treatment of neuropathic pain in a non-specialist setting, NICE recommends offering a choice of amitriptyline, duloxetine, gabapentin or pregabalin as initial treatment.

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### Question 4

In a double-blind placebo-controlled trial in people with painful diabetic neuropathy and  $HbA_{1c} \leq 11\%$  (97mmol/mol), compared with placebo, what was the difference in the percentage of patients in the intention-to-treat population who experienced at least a 30% reduction in pain with the capsaicin patch?

- a. 9.2%
- b. 18.7%
- c. 24.3%
- d. 31.7%
- e. 40.9%

**Answer: a.** In a double-blind trial, 369 patients were randomised to capsaicin patch (Qutenza) or a placebo patch. In the intention-to-treat population, the proportion of patients using the active patch that had at least a 30% reduction in pain was 40.9% (vs. 31.7% with placebo), but the significance of this difference was borderline ( $p=0.049$ ).

### Question 5

What proportion of patients with peripheral diabetic neuropathy who were treated with a capsaicin patch experienced treatment emergent adverse effects associated with neurological function?

- a. 0.9%
- b. 2.7%
- c. 4.4%
- d. 7.4%
- e. 11.8%

**Answer: e.** With the patch, more patients with peripheral diabetic neuropathy experienced treatment-emergent adverse effects associated with neurological function (11.8%) compared with the non-diabetic population (4.4%). The difference was mainly due to the difference in the reports of burning sensation (11.2% vs. 0.7%, respectively).