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PRESS RELEASE

NICE and British Hypertension Society confirm review of hypertension guidelines

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), the National Collaborating Centre for Chronic Conditions (NCC-CC) and the British Hypertension Society (BHS) have today confirmed the early review of the NICE clinical guidelines on the management of hypertension in adults in primary care.

The decision follows a preliminary review of new data on the management of hypertension by an Expert Advisory Committee comprising representatives from NICE, the BHS, and the Blood Pressure Association. The committee, set up by NICE and the BHS, considered the new data from the Anglo Scandinavian Cardiac Outcome Trial (ASCOT) which evaluated combinations of modern anti-hypertensive drugs compared with older regimens, and its potential impact on the current NICE and BHS guidelines.

Commenting on the decision, **Professor Peter Littlejohns, NICE Clinical and Public Health Director, said:** “The new data considered by the Hypertension Expert Advisory Committee are, in their view, likely to have a significant impact on the recommendations in the existing NICE guideline and also in the BHS guideline relating to pharmacological therapy to manage hypertension. Accordingly, we have asked the National Collaborating Centre for Chronic Conditions to work with the BHS to begin the review process immediately so that we are in a position to provide GPs with clear guidance as soon as possible.”

Professor Bryan Williams, Chairman of the British Hypertension Society's NHS Guideline Development Group, added: "This is a significant development in terms of ensuring that the many thousands of people with hypertension in England and Wales will be able to access treatments that are based on the most up-to-date clinical evidence."

Ends

Notes to Editors

About NICE

1. On 1 April 2005 the National Institute for Clinical Excellence took on the functions of the Health Development Agency to form the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). NICE is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health.
2. NICE produces guidance in three areas of health:
 - **public health** – guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention of ill health for those working in the NHS, local authorities and the wider public and voluntary sector
 - **health technologies** – guidance on the use of new and existing medicines, treatments and procedures within the NHS
 - **clinical practice** – guidance on the appropriate treatment and care of people with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS.

About the BHS

3. The BHS provides a medical and scientific research forum to enable sharing of cutting edge research in order to understand the origin of high blood pressure and improve its treatment.
4. The BHS has a track record of producing internationally renowned guidelines for the management of hypertension which are widely adopted in primary care in the UK and elsewhere.
5. The BHS has also established an educational programme to support scientists, doctors and other healthcare workers involved in understanding the basis of high blood pressure and improving its treatment throughout the UK.

The process for updating the guideline

6. The National Collaborating Centre for Chronic Conditions (NCC-CC) will carry out this work.
7. The NCC-CC will synthesise the results of the ASCOT study with other relevant evidence, undertake economic analysis and present this to a Guideline Development Group (GDG) who will then develop the guideline recommendations based on this.
8. The composition of the GDG will include representatives of the healthcare professions and patient/carer groups.
9. Validation of the guideline will include a period of stakeholder consultation.
10. The final guideline will be endorsed by the BHS and will replace their current guideline in this area.