

# The Use of Diuretics in Hypertension

**M**any classes of drugs have been used to treat hypertension, but the thiazide diuretics have received more attention recently because of the published results from the Antihypertensive and Lipid-Lowering Treatment to Prevent Heart Attack Trial (ALLHAT). The ALLHAT study found that diuretics have been virtually unsurpassed in preventing the cardiovascular complications of hypertension but that these medications remain underutilized.<sup>1</sup>

Data from MediMedia's Hospital Diagnosis and Therapy Audit report that approximately seven million hospitalized patients annually received a diagnosis of hypertension between the years 2000 and 2002. When we examined diuretic use for this population of patients, we found that 55% of hypertensive patients received no diuretics at all. The most commonly prescribed oral diuretics for these patients were furosemide (Lasix®, Aventis), hydrochlorothiazide (HCTZ), the combination product HCTZ/triamterene (Diazide®, Glaxo-SmithKline), and spironolactone (Figure 1).<sup>2</sup>

We also reviewed concomitant therapy with diuretics (Table 1). When diuretics were used, they were most often combined with another antihypertensive agent. Diuretics can enhance the antihypertensive efficacy of multidrug regimens and can be useful in achieving blood pressure control.<sup>1</sup>

## REFERENCES

1. Seventh Report of the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, National High Blood Pressure Education Program NIH Publication No. 03-5233. Bethesda, MD: NHLBI Health Information Center, May 2003. Available at: [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/hypertension/express.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/hypertension/express.pdf). Accessed August 8, 2003.
2. Hospital Diagnosis and Therapy Audit, 2000–2002. Yardley, PA: MediMedia USA, Inc.

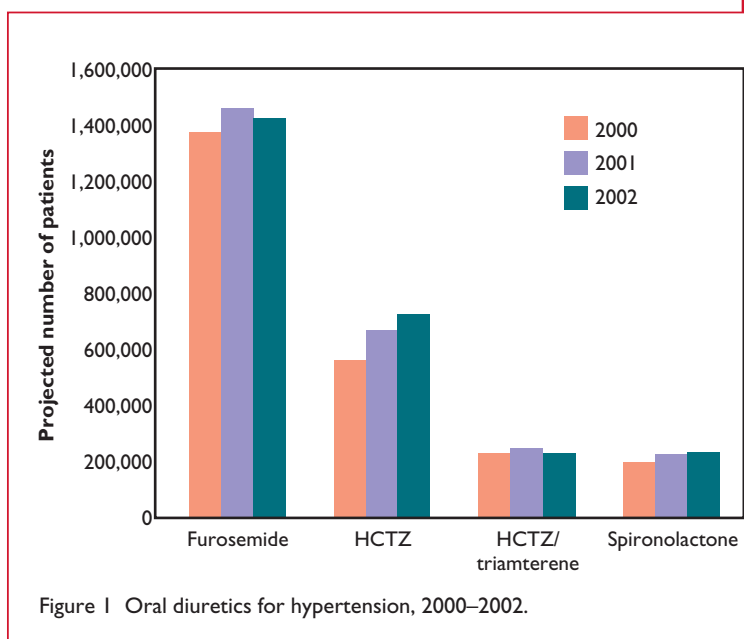


Figure 1 Oral diuretics for hypertension, 2000–2002.

Table 1 Concomitant Therapy with Oral Diuretics

	Furosemide	Hydrochlorothiazide (HCTZ)
Used alone	11%	11%
Used with ACE-inhibitors	51%	46%
Used with beta blockers	50%	44%
Used with calcium-channel blockers	36%	37%

ACE = angiotensin-converting enzyme.

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