

9. Whitworth JA; WHO, ISH writing group. 2003 World Health Organization (WHO)/International Society of Hypertension (ISH) statement on management of hypertension. *J Hypertens* 2003;21:1983-92.
10. National Institute for Clinical Excellence. Hypertension - management of hypertension in adults in primary care. Clinical Guideline 18. August 2004. <http://www.nice.org.uk> [cited 2005 Mar 14]

Dr Hill was a member of the World Health Organization/ International Society of Hypertension group which constructed the 'Statement on management of hypertension'. Professor Smith was Chair of the Writing Group which assembled Therapeutic Guidelines: Cardiovascular, 2003. Neither has an affiliation with any pharmaceutical company.

Self-test questions

The following statements are either true or false (answers on page 51)

3. Patients with essential hypertension taking calcium channel blockers stop their medication because of adverse effects more frequently than those patients taking diuretics.
4. Thiazide diuretics are no longer first-line treatment for uncomplicated hypertension.

Top 10 drugs

These tables show the top 10 subsidised drugs in 2003–04. The tables do not include private prescriptions.

Table 1

Top 10 drugs supplied by DDD/1000 pop/day *

Drug	PBS/RPBS †
1. atorvastatin	80.697
2. simvastatin	51.468
3. diltiazem hydrochloride	35.470
4. ramipril	31.725
5. omeprazole	21.631
6. irbesartan with hydrochlorothiazide	20.889
7. irbesartan	19.931
8. salbutamol	19.919
9. frusemide	19.403
10. sertraline	17.108

Table 2

Top 10 drugs by prescription counts

Drug	PBS/RPBS †
1. atorvastatin	7,097,744
2. simvastatin	6,008,468
3. paracetamol	4,714,533
4. omeprazole	4,537,098
5. irbesartan	3,371,882
6. celecoxib	3,240,047
7. salbutamol	3,220,045
8. atenolol	3,136,071
9. rofecoxib	3,028,529
10. ramipril	2,871,065

Table 3

Top 10 drugs by cost to Government

Drug	Cost to Government (\$A)	DDD/1000/day PBS/RPBS †	Prescriptions PBS/RPBS †
1. atorvastatin	397,430,210	80.697	7,097,744
2. simvastatin	363,667,949	51.468	6,008,468
3. omeprazole	197,471,882	21.631	4,537,098
4. salmeterol and fluticasone	163,196,875	– ‡	2,666,465
5. olanzapine	150,962,947	2.941	717,460
6. clopidogrel	128,213,796	6.446	1,617,367
7. pravastatin	125,298,133	14.150	2,131,080
8. esomeprazole	111,540,717	9.694	2,265,197
9. alendronic acid	99,266,727	7.942	1,921,121
10. rofecoxib	95,196,777	10.912	3,028,529

* The defined daily dose (DDD)/thousand population/day is a more useful measure of drug utilisation than prescription counts. It shows how many people, in every thousand Australians, are taking the standard dose of a drug every day.

† PBS Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, RPBS Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

‡ Combination drugs do not have a DDD allocated

Source: Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee (DUSC): Drug Utilisation Database © Commonwealth of Australia