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Therapy for diabetic neuropathy: an overview.

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Abstract: Neuropathy is a highly prevalent complication of diabetes that is only likely to increase as the diabetic epidemic continues. Unfortunately, the only disease-modifying treatment is to address the underlying diabetes with enhanced glucose control. In patients with type 1 diabetes, improved glycemic control dramatically reduces the incidence of neuropathy. In contrast, in patients with type 2 diabetes, better glucose control has only a marginal effect on the prevention of neuropathy. However, recognition and treatment of neuropathic pain is also important. An ever expanding number of randomized, controlled clinical trials support multiple medications for the reduction of pain. This includes medications such as calcium channel agonists, tricyclic antidepressants, and selective serotonin/norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors. However, the precise order and combination of these medications remains unclear. Furthermore, several new promising medications are being developed. Overall, the cornerstones of the treatment of diabetic neuropathy are improved glycemic control and initiation of a neuropathic pain medication with high levels of evidence to support its use when pain is present.

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