

## Drugs for Chronic Constipation

### Key Questions and Inclusion Criteria

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1. What is the general effectiveness of drugs used to treat chronic constipation?
  - a. Given general effectiveness, what is the comparative effectiveness of drugs used to treat chronic constipation?
2. Does treatment duration influence the effectiveness of drugs used to treat chronic constipation? When should treatments be switched in patients not responding to a given drug?
3. What is the comparative tolerability and safety of drugs used to treat chronic constipation?
4. Are there subgroups of patients based on demographics (age, racial or ethnic groups, and gender), other medications, or co-morbidities, including irritable bowel syndrome, for which one disease-modifying treatment is more effective or associated with fewer adverse events?

#### Inclusion Criteria

##### Population(s)

Adults and children with chronic constipation<sup>1, 2</sup>

##### Interventions (all formulations)

- 5-HT<sub>4</sub> Serotonin Receptor Agonist  
Tegaserod maleate (Zelnorm®)
- Chloride Channel Activator  
Lubiprostone (Amitiza®)
- Bulking Agents  
Psyllium
- Osmotic Laxatives  
Polyethylene glycol  
Lactulose

##### Effectiveness outcomes

- Symptoms e.g. stool frequency; stool consistency; ease of defecation; subjective global assessment of bowel habits; symptoms, including straining, bloating, and abdominal discomfort; fecal impaction; complete spontaneous bowel movement.
- Onset of action
- Quality of life

##### Safety outcomes

- Overall rate of adverse effects
- Withdrawals due to adverse effects

- Rebound effects
- Serious adverse events
- Specific adverse events

Study designs

1. For effectiveness, controlled clinical trials, good-quality systematic reviews, and controlled, prospective, observational studies .
2. For safety, in addition to controlled clinical trials, all observational studies will be included.

References

1. An Evidence-Based Approach to the Management of Chronic Constipation in North America. *The American Journal of Gastroenterology*. 2005;100(s1):S1-S4.
2. Brandt LJ, Prather CM, Quigley EMM, Schiller LR, Schoenfeld P, Talley NJ. Systematic Review on the Management of Chronic Constipation in North America. *The American Journal of Gastroenterology*. 2005;100(s1):S5-S21.