Recent reduction in the use of antihypertensives in patients younger than 65 in Australia

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Background
- In 1999-2000, 3.69 million Australians (>25y) had high blood pressure
- Hypertension is a major risk factor for coronary heart disease, stroke, heart failure
- Current hypertension guidelines target treatment to patients at a high absolute risk of a cardiovascular event

Methods
DUSC data
- 1996-2006 total population (Medicare + Pharmacy guild data)
- 2003-2006 age by sex (Medicare data)
- Prescription counts were converted to Defined Daily Doses (DDD/1000/day) with Australian Bureau of Statistics population data

BEACH data (Survey GPs 2005-2007)
- Extracted data to calculate % of each generic, that was prescribed for hypertension.

Conclusion
- The decreased utilisation in younger age groups may be due to better targeting by absolute risk.
- The secular reduction in the prevalence of hypertension (AIHW, 2004) may also explain this due to a cohort effect.