

## Is routine therapeutic monitoring of antiepileptic drugs for epilepsy necessary

<b>Clinical question</b>	Should I routinely measure serum drug concentrations in my patients who are taking anti-epileptics?
<b>Bottom line</b>	Routine measurement of serum drug concentrations to inform drug dose adjustments is no better than drug dose adjustments made on clinical grounds alone in newly-diagnosed epilepsy patients treated with a single drug: carbamazepine, valproate, phenytoin, phenobarbital or primidone.
<b>Caveat</b>	Fifty six per cent of the intervention group and 55 per cent of the controls were treated with carbamazepine. Therapeutic drug monitoring of specific anti-epileptics during polytherapy, in special situations or in selected patients may be useful, although evidence is lacking. i.e toxicity concerns.
<b>Context</b>	A GP with 2,000 patients may expect 1-2 new cases of epilepsy annually, 10-15 patients with epilepsy consulting and another 40-50 persons with a past history but no current problems.
<b>Cochrane Systematic Review</b>	Tomson et al. Therapeutic monitoring of antiepileptic drugs for epilepsy. Cochrane Reviews, 2007, Issue 1. This review contains 1 study with 180 participants.
Pearls No. 9 Feb 2007 (Brian R McAvoy)	

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