

Table I. Treatment Options for Neuropathic Pain

	Total daily dose and dose regimen	Recommendations
Strong recommendations for use		
Gapabentin	1200–3600 mg, in three divided doses	First line
Gabapentin extended release or enacarbil	1200–3600 mg, in two divided doses	First line
Pregabalin	300–600 mg, in two divided doses	First line
Serotonin-noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors duloxetine or venlafaxine*	60–120 mg, once a day (duloxetine); 150–225 mg, once a day (venlafaxine extended release)	First line
Tricyclic antidepressants	25–150 mg, once a day or in two divided doses	First line†
Weak recommendations for use		
Capsaicin 8% patches	One to four patches to the painful area for 30–60 min every 3 months	Second line (peripheral neuropathic pain)‡
Lidocaine patches	One to three patches to the region of pain once a day for up to 12 h	Second line (peripheral neuropathic pain)
Tramadol	200–400 mg, in two (tramadol extended release) or three divided doses	Second line
Botulinum toxin A (subcutaneously)	50–200 units to the painful area every 3 months	Third line; specialist use (peripheral neuropathic pain)
Strong opioids	Individual titration	Third line§

GRADE=Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development, and Evaluation (see appendix for details about the GRADE classification). *Duloxetine is the most studied, and therefore recommended, of the serotonin-noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors. †Tricyclic antidepressants generally have similar efficacy (appendix); tertiary amine tricyclic antidepressants (amitriptyline, imipramine, and clomipramine) are not recommended at doses greater than 75 mg/day in adults aged 65 years and older because of major anticholinergic and sedative side-effects and potential risk of falls,³³ an increased risk of sudden cardiac death has been reported with tricyclic antidepressants at doses greater than 100 mg daily.³⁴ ‡The long-term safety of repeated applications of high-concentration capsaicin patches in patients has not been clearly established, particularly with respect to degeneration of epidermal nerve fibres, which might be a cause for concern in progressive neuropathy. §Sustained release oxycodone and morphine have been the most studied opioids (maximum doses of 120 mg/day and 240 mg/day, respectively, in clinical trials; appendix); long-term opioid use might be associated with abuse, particularly at high doses, cognitive impairment, and endocrine and immunological changes.^{35–37}

Table 2: Drugs or drug classes with strong or weak recommendations for use based on the GRADE classification

Table I. Finnerup NB, Attal N, Haroutounian S, McNicol E, Baron R, Dworkin RH, et al. Pharmacotherapy for neuropathic pain in adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet Neurol.* 2015 Jan 6.