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Amlodipine: A Review of its Antihypertensive Action and ADR Monitoring

Bhavana Jambhale[1], Syeda Afifa[2]

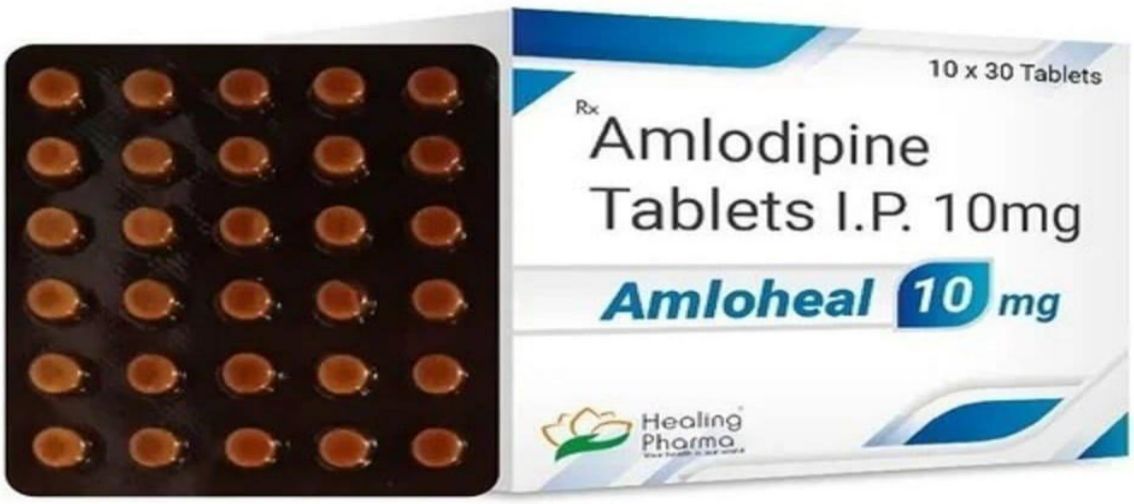
[1]Student, Department of pharmacy.
[2] Assistant professor, Department of pharmacy.
Sayali Charitable Trust's College of Pharmacy Chhatripati Sambhajinagar, Maharashtra, India.

Abstract:
Antihypertensive drugs consist of several pharmacological classes used to reduce elevated blood pressure and prevent long-term cardiovascular complications. These include diuretics, beta-blockers, ACE inhibitors, angiotensin receptor blockers, calcium channel blockers, alpha-blockers, and direct vasodilators. Among these, calcium channel blockers such as Amlodipine play a major role due to their potent and long-acting vasodilatory effects. Amlodipine, a dihydropyridine calcium channel blocker, lowers blood pressure by blocking L-type calcium channels in vascular smooth muscle, resulting in reduced peripheral resistance and improved 24-hour BP control with once-daily dosing. Overall, antihypertensive drugs are selected based on patient condition, comorbidities, and therapeutic goals, and they significantly improve clinical outcomes when used appropriately in monotherapy or combination therapy.

Keywords: Antihypertensive agents, hypertension, vasodilation, RAAS, diuretics, beta-blockers, ACE inhibitors, ARBs, calcium channel blockers, Amlodipine.

Introduction:

Antihypertensive drugs are a diverse group of medications used to lower elevated blood pressure and prevent the serious complications associated with sustained hypertension, including stroke, myocardial infarction, renal failure, and heart failure. Hypertension is a major global health problem, often asymptomatic, and therefore requires effective long-term pharmacological management. Antihypertensive agents act through several mechanisms such as reducing blood volume, decreasing sympathetic activity, inhibiting the renin–angiotensin– aldosterone system (RAAS), or inducing vasodilation to lower peripheral vascular resistance. The major therapeutic classes include diuretics, beta-blockers, ACE inhibitors, angiotensin receptor blockers, calcium channel blockers (notably Amlodipine), alpha-blockers, centrally acting agents, and direct vasodilators. Selection of an appropriate antihypertensive drug depends on the patient's age, comorbidities, severity of hypertension, and response to therapy. These drugs are often used in combination to achieve optimal and sustained blood pressure control, thereby improving patient outcomes and reducing overall cardiovascular risk.The major classes of antihypertensive drugs include diuretics, beta-blockers, ACE inhibitors, angiotensin receptor blockers, calcium channel blockers (with Amlodipine being a commonly used long-acting agent), alpha-blockers, centrally acting sympatholytics, and direct vasodilators. Each class differs in mechanism of action, onset, duration, and suitability for specific patient populations. The choice of therapy depends on factors such as age, severity of hypertension, presence of comorbid conditions (diabetes, chronic kidney disease, heart failure), and individual therapeutic response.(1)

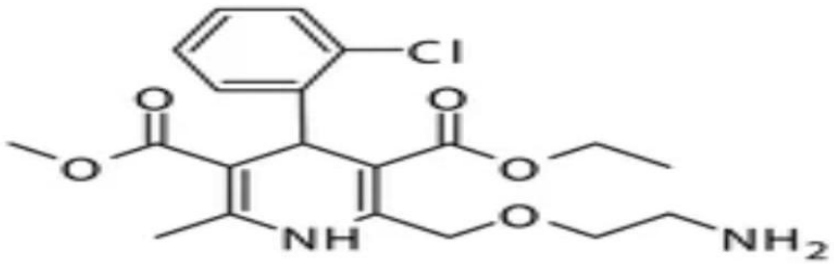


Definition
Pharmacovigilance is defined as the science and activities relating to the detection, assessment, understanding and prevention of adverse effects or any other medicine/vaccine-related problem. [2]

Objectives:
The primary objectives of pharmacovigilance are:
- **Detection**: Identifying adverse drug reactions (ADRs) and other drug-related problems.
- **Assessment**: Evaluating the nature and extent of the identified ADRs.
- **Understanding**: Investigating the mechanisms and causes behind ADRs.
- **Prevention**: Implementing strategies to minimize or eliminate the occurrence of ADRs.

These objectives aim to ensure the safety and efficacy of pharmaceutical products throughout their lifecycle[3]

Literature Review On Amlodipine
Drug Identification:
Structure: Dihydropyridine derivative ($C_{20}H_{25}ClN_2O_5$)



Amlodipine

1) **Generic Name:** Amlodipine
2) **Brand Names:** Norvasc, Amlong, Istin

3) **Drug Class:** Calcium Channel Blocker (Dihydropyridine type)
4) **Therapeutic Uses:** Hypertention, Angina pectories.
5) **Mechanism of ACtion:**

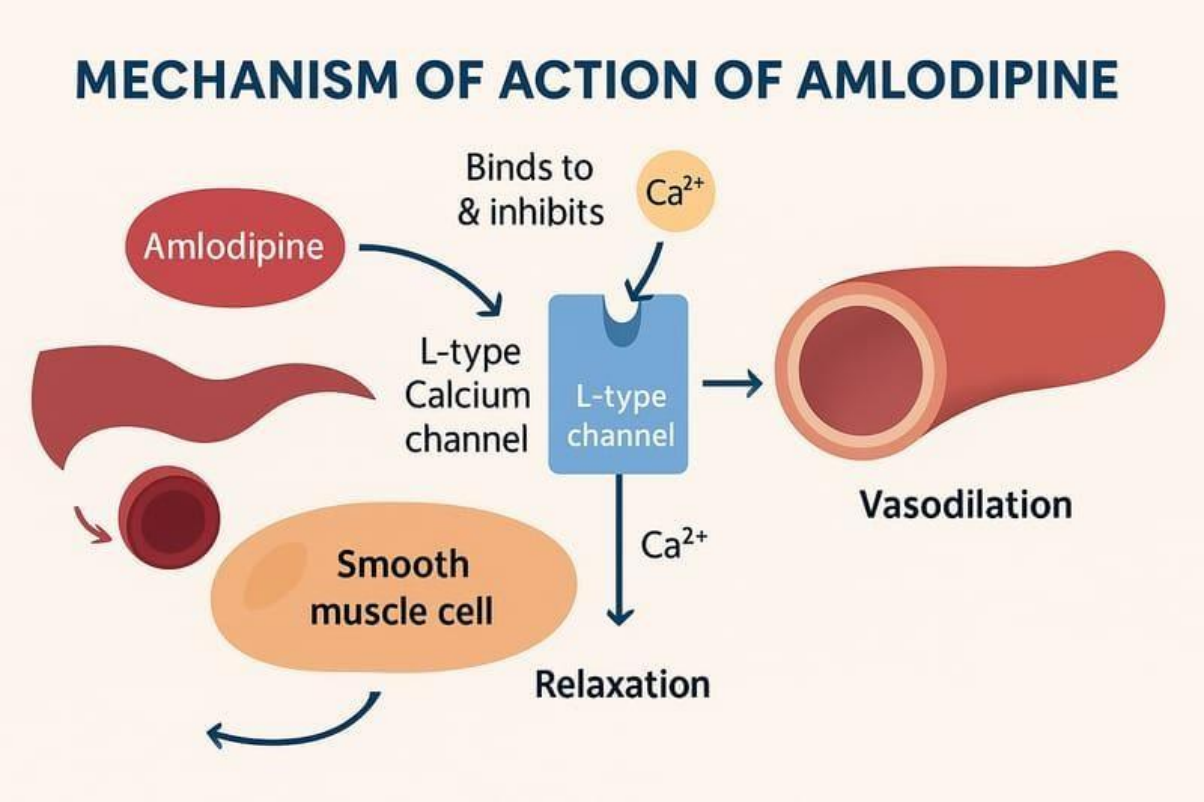
- Blocks L-type calcium channels in vascular smooth muscle
- ↓ Calcium influx → Vasodilation
- ↓ Peripheral resistance → ↓ Blood pressure.[4]

Introduction:

Amlodipine is a third-generation dihydropyridine calcium-channel blocker widely used in hypertension because of its potent vasodilatory effect, long half-life, and favorable tolerability profile [5,6]. It is recommended as a first-line antihypertensive in multiple international guidelines due to extensive outcome-based evidence supporting cardiovascular protection [7,8].

Mechanism of Action:

Amlodipine selectively inhibits L-type voltage-gated calcium channels in vascular smooth muscle, leading to reduced intracellular calcium, decreased peripheral resistance, and sustained vasodilation [5,6]. Additional pleiotropic effects—including improved endothelial function and anti-ischemic activity—have also been documented in clinical studies [7].



Pharmacokinetics and Pharmacodynamics:

Amlodipine exhibits 60–80% oral bioavailability, slow absorption, and a long elimination half-life of 30–50 hours, enabling once-daily dosing [5,6]. The drug undergoes hepatic metabolism via CYP3A4, producing inactive metabolites. Studies comparing racemic amlodipine with S-amlodipine indicate similar efficacy but potentially reduced dose-related adverse events with the S-enantiomer [10].

Clinical Efficacy in Hypertension:

Large randomized clinical trials, including ALLHAT and PARS, confirm the effectiveness of amlodipine in lowering systolic and diastolic blood pressure across diverse patient populations [7,8,9]). Amlodipine demonstrates superior BP reduction compared with ACE inhibitors in certain subgroups, particularly elderly and African-origin populations [7].

Major Cardiovascular Outcome Evidence:
A meta-analysis by Lee et al. reported a 10% reduction in total cardiovascular events and reduced incidence of stroke and myocardial infarction with amlodipine-based therapy [7]. While earlier studies suggested a slight increase in heart-failure hospitalization, large-scale data show neutral effects on mortality and strong cerebrovascular protection [8].

Blood Pressure Variability Reduction:
Amlodipine significantly reduces visit-to-visit blood pressure variability, an independent risk factor for stroke and cardiovascular events [8]. This effect may explain its superior strokeprotective benefit compared with some RAAS blockers.

Safety and Tolerability:
Amlodipine is generally well tolerated, with adverse effects such as edema (5–20%), headache, flushing, dizziness, and palpitations [5,8,11]. Peripheral edema is dose-dependent and often mitigated when combined with ACE inhibitors or ARBs [11].

Special Population Use:
Elderly patients benefit from amlodipine's smooth, sustained BP control and minimal orthostatic hypotension [5]. Because it is metabolized hepatically, dose adjustments are recommended in hepatic impairment, but no adjustment is needed in renal failure, making it suitable for CKD patients [8,11].

Combination Therapy Evidence:
Fixed-dose combinations such as telmisartan/amlodipine show superior BP reduction, improved adherence, and reduced edema compared with higher-dose amlodipine monotherapy [9]. Combination therapy is now considered optimal in Stage 2 hypertension.

Pharmacoeconomic Considerations:
Amlodipine is cost-effective due to generic availability, low monitoring requirements, and strong real-world evidence supporting reduction in CV events [12]. It remains one of the most economically favorable antihypertensives globally.

Pharmacological Effects :

- Blocks L-type calcium channels in vascular smooth muscle
- Causes **arteriolar vasodilation**
- **Reduces peripheral vascular resistance → lowers blood pressure**
- Minimal effect on heart rate and AV conduction.[13]

Table 1. Major Clinical Outcome Evidence For Amlodipine(7,9,7)

Study	Design	Key Finding
ALLHAT (2002)	RCT, n=33,357	Amlodipine similar CV outcome to Chlorthalidone; more edema.[7]
PARS (2010)	RCT, n=1250	Significant SBP/DBP reduction;better adherance. [9]
Lee SA et al., 2014	Meta-analysis	Decrease overall CV events (OR 0.90), decrease stroke (OR 0,84).[7]

Table 2: Amlodipine Adverse Effects(1,7,1,1)

Adverse Effect	Frequency	Notes
Peripheral edema	5-20%	Dose related; reduced with ACEI/ARB
Headache	2-10%	Generally mild
Dizziness	1-5%	Related to vasodilation
Flushing	<3%	Mild,transient

Drug Interactions:

- **Thiazide diuretics** – Increase lithium and digitalis toxicity.
- **Loop diuretics** – Ototoxicity increased with aminoglycosides.
- **K^+-sparing diuretics** – Cause severe hyperkalemia with ACE inhibitors.
- **ACE inhibitors** – Effect reduced by NSAIDs; ↑ serum K^+ with supplements.
- **ARBs** – Cause hyperkalemia when combined with K^+-sparing diuretics.
- **Beta-blockers** – Additive bradycardia with verapamil or diltiazem.
- **Calcium channel blockers** – Increase digoxin toxicity (verapamil).
- **Alpha-blockers** – Enhanced postural hypotension with diuretics. (14)

Contraindications:

1. Should not be used in **pregnancy** (ACE inhibitors, ARBs).
2. Avoid in **asthma or COPD** (non-selective beta-blockers).
3. Avoid in **severe bradycardia or heart block** (beta-blockers, verapamil, diltiazem).
4. Avoid in **renal failure** (potassium-sparing diuretics, ACE inhibitors, ARBs).
5. Avoid in **hyperkalemia** (ACE inhibitors, ARBs, K^+-sparing diuretics).
6. Avoid in **gout** (thiazide and loop diuretics).
7. Avoid in **depression** (methyldopa, clonidine).
8. Avoid in **coronary artery disease** (hydralazine, minoxidil).
9. Avoid in **severe hepatic disease** (methyldopa).
10. Use cautiously in **orthostatic hypotension-prone** patients (alpha-blockers).(14)

Identification of Adverse Effects of Selected Drugs:

1. Common Adverse Effects

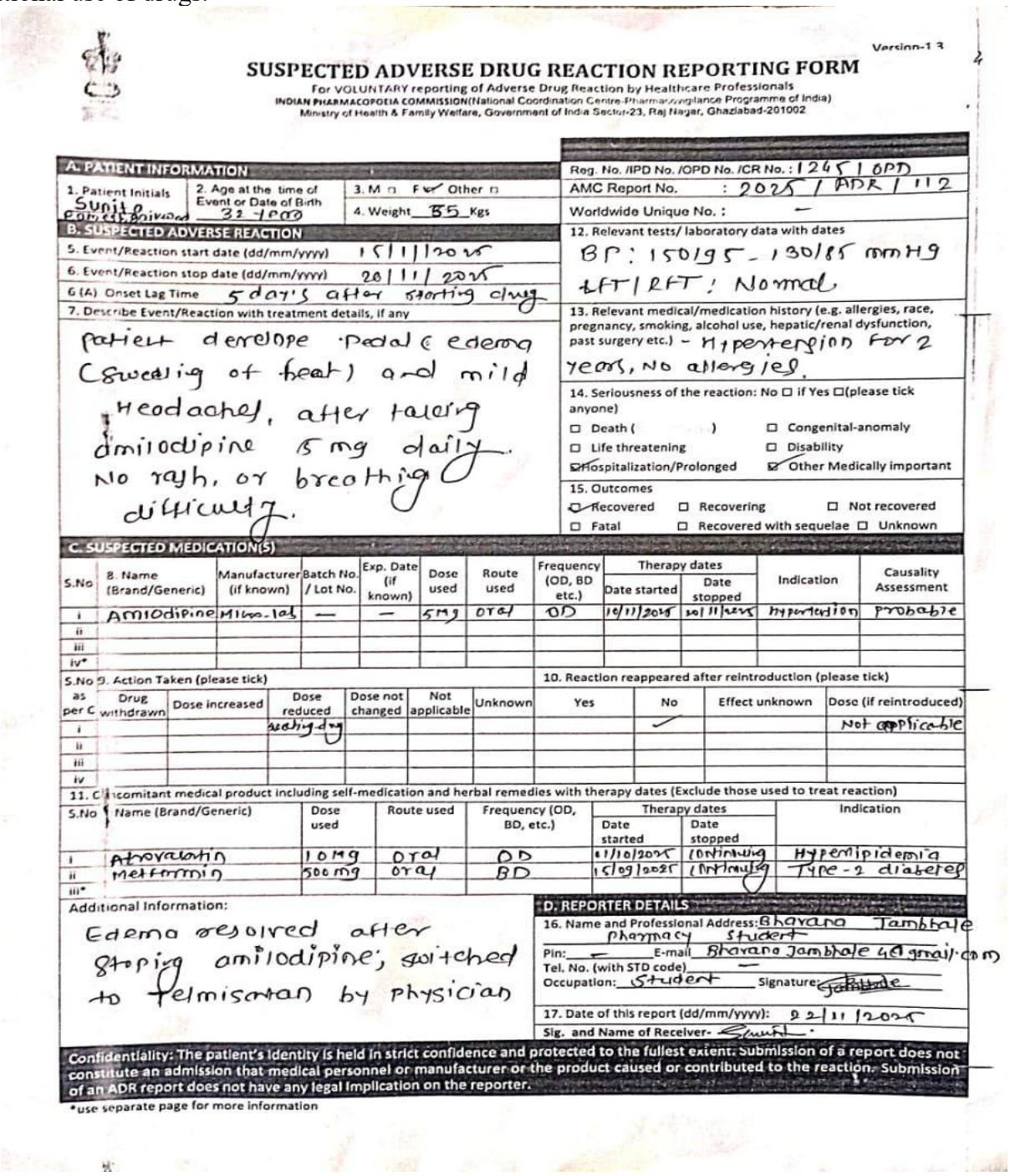
- Peripheral edema (ankle/foot swelling): Most frequent, dose-dependent.
- Headache and dizziness: Due to vasodilation and mild hypotension.
- Flushing and palpitations: Caused by reflex sympathetic activation.
- Fatigue and somnolence: Occasionally reported in long-term use.
- Nausea, abdominal discomfort, constipation: Mild gastrointestinal effects.(15)

2. Less Common or Rare Adverse Effects

- Gingival hyperplasia: Gum overgrowth with prolonged use.
- Hypotension or syncope: More likely in elderly or over-dosed patients.
- Hepatic dysfunction: Rare cases of elevated liver enzymes or jaundice.
- Worsening angina or myocardial infarction: Rarely occurs at initiation in severe coronary artery disease.
- Allergic reactions: Rash, itching, or facial swelling.(15)

Adverse Drug Reactions (ADR) Monitoring Form

An ADR monitoring form is used to document and evaluate any harmful or unintended effects of medicines. It plays a vital role in ensuring patient safety, identifying new adverse reactions, and promoting the rational use of drugs.



Version-1.3

SUSPECTED ADVERSE DRUG REACTION REPORTING FORM

For VOLUNTARY reporting of Adverse Drug Reaction by Healthcare Professionals
INDIAN PHARMACOPOEIA COMMISSION(National Coordination Centre-Pharmacovigilance Programme of India)
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India Sector-23, Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad-201002

A. PATIENT INFORMATION

1. Patient Initials: Sunita Kamlesh Bhiwal
2. Age at the time of Event or Date of Birth: 32 Years
3. M ☐ F ☑ Other ☐
4. Weight: 55 Kgs

Reg. No. /IPD No. /OPD No. /ICR No. : 1245 / OPD
AMC Report No. : 2025 / ADR / 112
Worldwide Unique No. : —

B. SUSPECTED ADVERSE REACTION

5. Event/Reaction start date (dd/mm/yyyy): 15/11/2025
6. Event/Reaction stop date (dd/mm/yyyy): 20/11/2025
6 (A) Onset Lag Time: 5 day's after starting drug
7. Describe Event/Reaction with treatment details, if any:
Patient developed Pedal Edema (Sweeling of feet) and mild Headache, after taking amlodipine 5 mg daily. No rash, or breathing difficulty.

12. Relevant tests/ laboratory data with dates:
BP: 150/95 - 130/85 mmHg
LFT / RFT: Normal

13. Relevant medical/medication history (e.g. allergies, race, pregnancy, smoking, alcohol use, hepatic/renal dysfunction, past surgery etc.) - Hypertension for 2 years, No allergies.

14. Seriousness of the reaction: No ☐ if Yes ☐(please tick anyone)
☐ Death ( ) ☐ Congenital-anomaly
☐ Life threatening ☐ Disability
☑ Hospitalization/Prolonged ☑ Other Medically important

15. Outcomes
☑ Recovered ☐ Recovering ☐ Not recovered
☐ Fatal ☐ Recovered with sequelae ☐ Unknown

C. SUSPECTED MEDICATION(S)

S.No	8. Name (Brand/Generic)	Manufacturer (if known)	Batch No. / Lot No.	Exp. Date (if known)	Dose used	Route used	Frequency (OD, BD etc.)	Therapy dates: Date started	Therapy dates: Date stopped	Indication	Causality Assessment
i	Amlodipine	Micro-labs	—	—	5mg	Oral	OD	16/11/2025	20/11/2025	Hypertension	Probable
ii											
iii											
iv*											

S.No as per C	9. Action Taken (please tick) Drug withdrawn	Dose increased	Dose reduced	Dose not changed	Not applicable	Unknown	10. Reaction reappeared after reintroduction (please tick) Yes	No	Effect unknown	Dose (if reintroduced)
i			Stopping drug					✓		Not applicable
ii										
iii										
iv										

11. Concomitant medical product including self-medication and herbal remedies with therapy dates (Exclude those used to treat reaction)

S.No	Name (Brand/Generic)	Dose used	Route used	Frequency (OD, BD, etc.)	Therapy dates: Date started	Therapy dates: Date stopped	Indication
i	Atorvastatin	10mg	Oral	OD	01/10/2025	Continuing	Hyperlipidemia
ii	Metformin	500mg	Oral	BD	15/09/2025	Continuing	Type-2 diabetes
iii*							

Additional Information:
Edema resolved after stoping amlodipine; switched to telmisartan by physician

D. REPORTER DETAILS

16. Name and Professional Address: Bhavana Jambhale Pharmacy Student
Pin: — E-mail: Bhavana Jambhale 4@gmail.com
Tel. No. (with STD code) —
Occupation: Student Signature: Jambhale

17. Date of this report (dd/mm/yyyy): 22/11/2025
Sig. and Name of Receiver: Sunita

Confidentiality: The patient's identity is held in strict confidence and protected to the fullest extent. Submission of a report does not constitute an admission that medical personnel or manufacturer or the product caused or contributed to the reaction. Submission of an ADR report does not have any legal implication on the reporter.

*use separate page for more information

Key Components of an ADR Monitoring Form

While the specific format may vary , a typical ADR Monitoring Form should include the following essentials

Information:

1. Patient Information

a. Name/ID number: Sunita Ramesh Giakwad
b. Age, sex : 32year, female
c. Weight : 55

2. Treatment Information

a. Suspected drug name(s): Amlodipine
b. Dose: 5mg/10mg
c. Route: oral
d. Frequency : Once daily
e. Duration of therapy : Usually long- term (Chronic therapy)

3. Adverse Reaction Monitoring

• Hematologic o Anemia o Leukopenia or thrombocytopenia o Easy bruising or bleeding
• Gastrointestinal o Nausea and vomiting o Diarrhea or constipation o Liver enzyme elevation, abdominal pain
• Renal
o Reduced urine output (oliguria) o Increased creatinine or urea levels o Electrolyte imbalance
• Hepatic
o Jaundice (yellowing of skin/eyes) o Abnormal liver function tests (AST, ALT, bilirubin) o Hepatitis or liver injury
• Neurological o Dizziness, headache o Seizures or neuropathy o Confusion or altered mental status
•Cardiac
o Palpitations or irregular heartbeat o Arrhythmia or tachycardia/bradycardia o Chest pain, hypertension or hypotension[16]

Hospital Visit

Pre – Interaction preparation:

- **Review patient record:** Check diagnosis, allergies, and current medications.
- **Know the drug details:** Mechanism, dose range (5–10 mg once daily), and side effects.
- **Prepare monitoring data:** Bring latest BP and pulse readings.
- **Have reference material:** Keep drug chart or leaflet for quick info.

Interaction with Physicians

- **Confirm indication:** Hypertension or angina.
- **Discuss dosage:** Verify correct dose and frequency.
- **Report patient response:** Mention BP trends and side effects (e.g., edema, dizziness).
- **Review interactions:** Inform about other drugs being used.
- **Seek guidance:** Ask about dose adjustment or follow-up schedule.

Interaction with Nurses

- **Administration:** Give at same time daily, with or without food.
- **Monitor vitals:** Check BP and pulse before/after giving dose.
- **Educate patient:** Don't stop suddenly; rise slowly to prevent dizziness.
- **Observe and report:** Note swelling, headache, or low BP to physician.
- **Record findings:** Document dose, vitals, and patient response.

Pharmacist's Tools Carried:

1. Drug reference book / app
2. Patient medication chart
3. BP monitor (sphygmomanometer)
4. Stethoscope
5. Pen and notepad
6. Patient information leaflet
7. Calculator

Benefits After Physician & Nurse Interaction:

1. Gained better knowledge of amlodipine use and dose.
2. Learned to monitor BP and side effects correctly.
3. Improved communication and counseling skills.
4. Understood teamwork in patient care.

Patients Interview

1.Pharmacist- What is your age and gender ?

Patient- I am 32 years old female.
2.Pharmacist- Do you have family history of hypertension?
Patient- yes my father has high blood pressure.
3.Pharmacist- When you diagnosed with high blood pressure?
Patient- 3year ago.
4.Pharmacist- Any swelling in feet or ankle?
Patient- yes mild swelling some time.
5.Pharmacist- Have you had side effect from medicine?
Patient- No side effect noticed.
6.Pharmacist- Do you take your medicine regulary?
Patient- yes daily.
7.Pharmacist- Do you have headache or dizziness?
Patient- Sometimes.
8.Pharmacist- Do you take any medicine for it?
Patient- Yes, Amlodipine daily.
9.Pharmacist- Do you visit your doctor regulary?
Patient- Yes, once every2-3 month.
Pharmacist- ok thank you for cooporation.

Assessment of ADR

The **Naranjo Adverse Drug Reaction Probability Scale** is a **standard questionnaire** used to determine whether an adverse drug reaction (ADR) is **definitely, probably, possibly, or doubtfully** related to a particular drug.

Amlodipine Information:

- ❖ Drug name: Amlodipine ❖ Class: antihypertensive Agent
- ❖ Indication:
- ❖ Common ADR: peripheral edema, palpitations, dizziness.

Naranjo Scale:[17]

Example ADR: Peripheral edema (ankle swelling)

Question (Naranjo Scale)	**Answer**	**Score**
1. Are there previous conclusive reports on this reaction?	Yes	+1
2. Did the adverse event appear after the drug was given?	Yes	+2
3. Did the ADR improve when the drug was discontinued or dose reduced?	Yes	+1
4. Did the ADR reappear when the drug was readministered?	Not done	0
5. Are there alternative causes that could have caused the reaction?	No	+2
6. Did the reaction reappear with placebo?	Not applicable	0
7. Was the drug detected in toxic concentrations in body fluids?	No	0
8. Was the reaction more severe with increased dose or less severe with decreased dose?	Yes	+1
9. Did the patient have a similar reaction to the same or similar drug before?	No	0
10. Was the adverse event confirmed by objective evidence?	Yes (edema observed)	+1

Total Score: 8 Interpretation

- ≥ **9** → *Definite ADR*
- **5–8 → Probable ADR**
- **1–4** → Possible ADR
- **0 or less** → Doubtful ADR
- **Score 5–8 = Probable ADR**
- Peripheral edema is **probably due to amlodipine**.

Assessment: Based on the **Naranjo Adverse Drug Reaction Probability Scale**, the total score for the reported ADR (peripheral edema) associated with **Amlodipine** was **7**, indicating a **"Probable" relationship.**

CONCLUSION

Amlodipine is a very useful medicine for treating high blood pressure. It works by relaxing blood vessels, which makes it easier for the heart to pump blood. Many big studies have proven that amlodipine reduces blood pressure safely and also lowers the risk of heart attack and stroke. It works for almost all types of patients, including elderly people and those with kidney problems.

The medicine is usually well tolerated. The most common side effect is swelling of the legs (edema), but it can be reduced when amlodipine is used with other blood pressure medicines like ACE inhibitors or ARBs. Overall, amlodipine is safe, effective, and one of the best firstchoice treatments for hypertension.

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