Preface

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Workshop on Antihypertensive Drug Treatment
The Benefits, Costs, and Choices

For more than 5 decades, actuarial and population studies have identified the high prevalence of hypertension and its complications, and recent clinical trials have demonstrated the benefits of controlling this important medical problem. However, these studies have also raised a number of clinical and public health issues. These issues were reviewed and discussed at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) workshop on “Antihypertensive Drug Treatment: The Benefits, Costs, and Choices” held in Bethesda, Maryland on June 11–12, 1987. This supplement to Hypertension contains the Proceedings from that workshop.

The objectives of the workshop were as follows: 1) To review the epidemiological and clinical trials evidence regarding a) the risks of hypertension for major cardiovascular-renal morbidity and mortality and b) the benefits of drug treatment. 2) To consider alternative treatment approaches, including potential benefits, side effects, and costs. 3) To raise issues and potential recommendations for consideration by the 1988 Joint National Committee on Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure (JNC-IV) and 4) To suggest areas for further research.

The first two of these issues are addressed principally by the 28 articles representing reviews of assigned topics as well as invited commentaries. These articles and commentaries, along with the open discussion summarized by the guest editors, served also to air issues in preparation for the work of the JNC-IV, the report of which has now been published. These workshop Proceedings will also be used as background information for other National High Blood Pressure Education Program working group reports. Finally, the closing discussion presents highlights of the research recommendations.

These Proceedings represent, first and foremost, the work of the authors and editors, but would not have come to fruition without the contributions of three individuals: Stephen MacMahon, PhD, who was instrumental in conceiving the workshop while a guest researcher at the NHLBI; and Yvonne Rodler and Abbe Smith of Kappa Systems, Incorporated, who provided the logistic support before, during, and after the workshop.

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