Abstract
Evidence regarding the health consequences of smoking is undeniable, yet 21% of the American population continues to smoke. In addition to behavioral modifications, first-line treatment options include nicotine replacement therapies and bupropion SR. Varenicline, which was recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), offers a novel mechanism of action for smoking cessation. This article reviews current first-line smoking cessation aids and evaluates the clinical trials pertaining to the efficacy and safety of varenicline. Additionally, the authors attempt to establish the role of varenicline in smoking cessation therapy and determine whether varenicline should be used prior to other first-line smoking cessation aids, particularly considering the lower costs of generic alternatives. At present, clinical studies have not established the efficacy of varenicline after repeated courses, following bupropion failures, or in various unstudied populations. Relatively poor study outcomes emphasize the need to provide patients with behavioral counseling throughout each quit attempt and for 1 year past the quit date.

Keywords