



Concerns: Too Many Meds

Findings suggest that regular reviews can help ensure that older people are not taking meds that are unnecessary or inappropriate.

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Many older people living with HIV take multiple medications, some of which they may not need. Researchers in Spain found that around a third of older HIV-positive individuals may be taking medications that are inappropriate for their current condition or are using them longer than recommended. Prolonged use of medications for depression and anxiety, including benzodiazepines and anticholinergic drugs, was a particular concern. Side effects of anticholinergics may include decreased mental alertness and poor coordination. On the other hand, clinicians were not prescribing certain drugs, such as statins, for some people who could benefit. A second study found that people taking multiple medications had a slower gait speed—a sign of frailty—and were more likely to experience recurrent falls. In addition to their antiretrovirals, 36% of study participants ages 60 and older were using five or more prescription drugs. These findings suggest that regular reviews can help ensure that older people are not taking meds that are unnecessary or inappropriate.

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