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Benzodiazepines in older persons promote adverse events

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A multiple of studies on the use of benzodiazepines in older persons have recently gained attention with changing population demographics. This drug category puts the older person at risk for memory impairment, hypersomnolence, falls, fractures, motor vehicle accidents and potential addiction. This problem is further compounded by the fact that over half of these populations have at least three chronic health problems for which they consume other medications. Together this leads to significant polypharmacy and inappropriate medications. This contributes to a paucity of adverse drug events. The program will discuss use of Beers criteria to reduce inappropriate medications both in the community and acute setting. Dangers of long term use of benzodiazepines results in overall poorer health and the potential harm to quality of life. Nursing must be an active partner in commitment to a multidisciplinary approach for prescribing in older persons. Advocacy for active involvement of the patient and caregivers into the prescribing decisions must be guided by good clinical practice. Non-pharmacological strategies should be encouraged such as sleep hygiene, cognitive behavioral therapy and exercise. Current quality measures focus on extensive drug reviews with reduction strategies to eliminate inappropriate medications. Use of the Beers or STOPP criteria by nursing can make a difference that is patient centered, holistic and involves families will benefit the quality of life for this population. Nursing advocacy for no benzodiazepines contributes to promoting wellness for this population.

Biography

Kathryn M Cacic has completed her DNP with a focus on executive leadership from Rush University in Chicago, Illinois. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Nursing in both the graduate and RN-BS programs. She has a long and varied career primarily in University Teaching Hospitals and spent 31 years with the USAF Reserve. Her Doctoral work focused on the reduction of benzodiazepines in older adults with poster presentations at National NICHE & GAPNA conferences. In addition to teaching, she volunteers her time as a Nurse Practitioner with a local community of Amish and serves on the Board for this Clinic

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