

WHY IS THIS WORK IMPORTANT?

- Anticholinergic and sedative medicines are associated with delirium, confusion, reduced cognitive performance, falls and other serious outcomes.
- Many scales have been developed to measure the anticholinergic or sedative activity of individual medicines, and to calculate the overall cumulative anticholinergic and sedative burden of the medicines a person is taking.
- BUT...these lists are out of date, not developed specifically for the Australian setting and considerable work is required if you want to estimate the anticholinergic or sedative burden for your patients in clinical practice.

WHAT DID WE DO?

1. We systematically reviewed the literature to identify previously published lists of anticholinergic and/or sedative medicines.
2. We identified additional medicines with these properties which are used in Australia but which didn't appear on the previously published lists. For these medicines, we (3 pharmacists + a geriatrician) assigned them an anticholinergic score, based on their properties and mechanism of action.
3. We also collated information relating to the minimum daily dose, to allow calculation of the drug burden index.
4. Using this information, we developed a computer tool to calculate the anticholinergic burden and drug burden index for the medicines a patient is taking and tested it in a convenience sample of 200 older patients recently discharged from hospital (Ethics approval was received from CALHN and UniSA Human Research Ethics Committees).

Two thirds of older people use sedative or anticholinergic medicines.

De-prescribing these medicines can reduce the risk of harm, and we're developing a tool to help to do this.

WHAT DID WE FIND?

- There were 186 different medicines with anticholinergic or sedative activity on previously published lists; 49 of these medicines are not currently marketed or available in Australia.
- We identified a further 12 medicines available in Australia with anticholinergic or sedative effects, which had not been included in previous lists. A final list of 168 medicines with anticholinergic or sedative effects was developed.
- We tested the list in a convenience sample of 200 older patients with a median age of 88 years. 78% were female.

WHAT DID WE FIND?

- 65% of older people in our convenience sample were using anticholinergic or sedative medicines, most commonly oxycodone (n=38 participants) and pregabalin (n=23).
- Amongst people taking anticholinergics or sedatives, the median anticholinergic burden per person was 1 and the median DBI per person was 0.9
- There is an opportunity to de-prescribe sedative and anticholinergic medicines to reduce the risk of harm in older patients.



Sedatives and anticholinergic medicines: a comprehensive list developed for the Australian setting

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Take a picture to read more about why we think that anticholinergic scales are a good idea *in theory*, but are sometimes less useful in practice ...

If you don't have a QR code scanner, go to: <https://insightplus.mja.com.au/2019/16/anticholinergic-burden-scales-a-great-idea-in-theory/>



Part 1



Part 2



Part 3