

Appropriate Medications

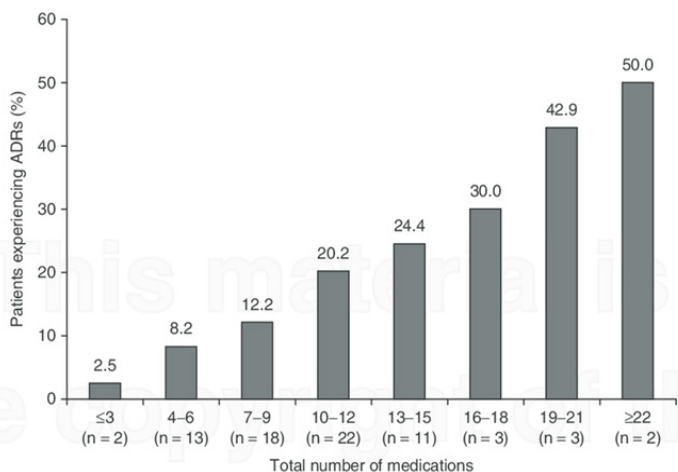
Using medications appropriately in hospice is more than simply making sure to follow the prescriber’s directions. Appropriate use of medications means the difference between a good and great quality of life for the patient. It also means the difference between a boss with a scowl and a happy boss on pharmacy invoice day.

Ultimately, what is best for the patient ends up being best for the hospice.

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is focused on decreasing the number of drugs Medicare patients are taking. This is evident in the latest changes to the Long Term Care Conditions of Participation effective November 2017 and the requirement to discontinue “all unnecessary medications.” Multiple studies have shown the relationship between adverse drug events and the number of medications a patient takes. Unfortunately, at the end of life when focus should be on comfort and quality of life, the average number of prescriptions per patient increases to as many as 20 medications a day. When a person takes 5 or more medications daily (94% of hospice patients on admission)

- ✦ 58% risk of adverse reaction
- ✦ Up to 54% risk of cognitive impairment
- ✦ Risk of fall and recurrent fall increases
- ✦ 48% risk of hip fracture
- ✦ Increased rate of urinary incontinence
- ✦ Poorer nutritional status- decreases fiber, fat soluble & B vitamins intake and increases in cholesterol, glucose and sodium

Risks increase exponentially as medications increase.



When medications are discontinued systematically, using tools such as STOPP/START and PresQUIPP patients reported up to an 88% improvement in quality of life. What more can we ask for as health professionals?

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4. Ray, S., et al. "Prospective observational evaluation of incidences and implications of drug-drug interactions induced adverse drug reactions in critically ill patients." *Indian journal of pharmaceutical sciences* 72.6 (2010): 787.