



Star measure (polypharmacy): Use of multiple central nervous system-active medications in older adults

This measure tracks the number of older adults (age 65 and older) prescribed three or more unique central nervous system (CNS) medications with fills for two or more 30-day supplies. An example patient is prescribed three different CNS medications. This patient has an increased safety risk. This can affect the overall Star rating.

- **Amitriptyline** (for sleep): Filled 30 tablets on January 5 and 30 tablets on February 5.
- **Lorazepam** (for anxiety): Filled 30 tablets on January 10 and 30 tablets on February 10.
- **Pregabalin** (for fibromyalgia): Filled 30 tablets on January 8 and 30 tablets on February 8.

The use of multiple CNS active medications puts older adults at increased risk of falls. Falls in older adults are associated with serious injuries.

CNS-active medications*

| Class | CNS-active medications | Potentially Safer Alternatives |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Antiepileptics ^y | Brivaracetam, cannabidiol, carbamazepine, divalproex sodium, eslicarbazepine, ethosuximide, ethotoin, felbamate, fenfluramine, gabapentin, lacosamide, lamotrigine, levetiracetam, methsuximide, oxcarbazepine, perampanel, phenobarbital, phenytoin, pregabalin, primidone, rufinamide, stripentol, tiagbine, topiramate, valproic acid, vigabatrin, zonisamide | If not used for seizures, alternatives found based on reason for use. |
| Antipsychotics | Apripirazole, asenapine, brexpiprazole, cariparazine, | Recommend lowest effective dose while avoiding other CNS |

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| | chlorpromazine, clozapine, fluphenazine, haloperidol, iloperidone, loxapine, lumateperone, lurasidone, molindone, olanzapine, paliperidone, perphenazine, pimavanserin, pimozide, quetiapine, risperidone, thioridazine, thiothixene, trifluoperazine, ziprasidone | active medications where possible. |
| Benzodiazepines | Alprazolam, chlordiazepoxide, clobazam, clonazepam, clorazepate, diazepam, estazolam, flurazepam, lorazepam, midazolam, oxazepam, quazepam, temazepam, triazolam | Lorazepam, oxazepam |
| Sedative hypnotics | Eszopiclone, zaleplon, zolpidem | Doxepin (<6 mg), melatonin, ramelteon |
| Opioids α | Benzhydrocodone, buprenorphine β , butorphanol, codeine, dihydrocodeine, fentanyl, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, levorphanol, meperidine, methadone, morphine, opium, oxycodone, oxymorphone, tapentadol, tramadol | Alternatives found based on nature of pain syndrome (i.e., neuropathic, orthopedic, etc.) |
| Antidepressants: SNRI, SSRI, TCA** | Amitriptyline, amoxapine, citalopram, clomipramine, desipramine, desvenlafaxine, doxepin, duloxetine, escitalopram, fluoxetine, fluvoxamine, imipramine, levomilnacipram, milnacipram, nortriptyline, paroxetine, protriptyline, sertraline, trimipramine, venlafaxine | Recommend lowest effective dose while avoiding other CNS active medications where possible. |

* Includes combination products that contain a target medication listed and the following routes of administration: buccal, nasal, oral, transdermal, rectal, and sublingual. Injectable and inhalation routes of administration are not included.

α Includes prescription opioid cough medications.

β Excludes single-agent and combination products used to treat opioid use disorder (i.e., buprenorphine sublingual tablets, all buprenorphine/naloxone combination products, and Probuphine®).

**SNRI = serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors; SSRI = selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors; and TCA = tricyclic antidepressants.

Members with a diagnosis of seizures are excluded from the measure.

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