



Medication/Drug Use

Section Summary

- Anticholinergics and benzodiazepines have both been linked to an increased dementia risk.
 - Doctors may not be thinking about dementia risk when they prescribe these medications.
 - Anticholinergics are drugs such as tricyclic antidepressants and some drugs that are used to treat conditions like Allergies, Asthma, Diarrhea, Parkinson's disease symptoms, etc.
 - Older adults who take anticholinergics, especially long term, have been found to have a higher risk of developing dementia and Alzheimer's disease.
 - Benzodiazepines are drugs mainly used to treat different types of anxiety disorders and in some cases insomnia and epilepsy.
 - Middle aged and older adults who use benzodiazepines have been found to be at a greater risk for developing dementia.
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Activities

Activity One: To Take or Not To Take (Medication)

This activity serves only as a thinking exercise and participants should always consult with their healthcare provider when making decisions about medication use.

- Have each participant create a personal pros and cons list of medication use.
 - Allow participants to think about the risks vs. benefit and what is important to them.
- Have participants (depending on their comfort level) share some of the pros and cons they have come up with.
- Use screensharing or a whiteboard to create a master pros and cons list for the group.

Discussion Questions

- Were you previously aware of the associations between anticholinergics and benzodiazepines and dementia?
- After learning about the dementia related risk factors of anticholinergics and benzodiazepine how likely would you be to use them?
 - Additionally, what kind of conversation would you hope to have with your healthcare provider before taking them?