

1. Medication Management in Older Adults

Learning Objectives:

Understand Age-Related Changes in Pharmacotherapy

- Describe pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic changes associated with aging (ex. Renal and hepatic function).
- Recognize how physiologic changes influence drug metabolism, distribution, and elimination, and how they affect prescribing decisions. (ex dose amount, frequency, duration, etc).

Conducting a Comprehensive Medication Review

- Recognize the importance of evaluating all current medications, including over-the-counter and herbal products.
- Evaluate for polypharmacy, adverse drug reactions, and drug-drug or drug-disease interactions.
- Incorporate medication-related issues as part of the differential diagnosis in presentations of acute illness, cognitive changes, and/or functional decline.
- Explore processes and measures to integrate pharmacy consultation and guidance on medication-related issues for older adult ED patients.

Recognize and Manage High-Risk Medications

- Identify medications that pose increased risk to older adults
- Apply strategies to minimize harm, including deprescribing when appropriate and using safer alternatives (ex. Use of Beer's list, STOP criteria)
- Choose appropriate medications and dosages based on:
 - Age-related physiologic changes
 - Functional status
 - Comorbidities and acute illnesses
 - Current medications and potential interactions
- Avoid prescribing cascades and apply risk-benefit analysis, especially when using high-risk medications (e.g., benzodiazepines, NSAIDs, opioids, insulin, digoxin, warfarin).
- Develop strategies for safe de-prescribing in the ED (ex. Tapering dose schedules, communication with primary care physician)

Communicate Effectively About Medications

- Develop strategies for clear explanation of indications, dosages, administration instructions, side effects, and stopping criteria for all newly prescribed medications.