

Seniors at Risk for Medication-Related Problems

by NewsUSA

Generally, older people are at a higher risk for medication-related problems because they have more chronic conditions and are taking more medications. At least 243,000 seniors end up in the hospital each year due to adverse reactions caused by the combination of over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription medications.

Whenever two or more medications are taken concurrently, there is a chance that there will be an interaction among the drugs. The interaction may increase or decrease the effectiveness or the side effects of the drugs. It also may result in a new side effect not seen with the use of any one drug alone. For seniors, such side effects may include depression, confusion, falls and even death.

As a result, studies exploring how over-the-counter medications affect patients have new relevance. Some companies are working to help provide seniors with safe over-the-counter remedies for illnesses such as the common cold.

Recently, The Quigley Corp. announced the results of an independent double-blind placebo-controlled study, to be released in the American Journal of Therapeutics. The study found the formula in the company's zinc gluconate glycine cold lozenges to be a safe course of therapy to reduce the duration of the common cold when administered to a geriatric population diagnosed with one or more health conditions.

The study found no adverse effects with a range of concomitant medications, both prescription and over-the-counter, that participants reported taking.

Doctors stress the need for seniors to be aware of the way different medications interact with one another, as well as their impact on a variety of medical conditions. The Quigley Corp. recently joined the National Council on the Aging in launching a public awareness campaign called "Seniors and Medicine: Proper Use for Good Health" to educate seniors about drug interactions and possible side effects of many popular OTC remedies.

For more information, visit www.senior-med-safety.com.

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