Pharmaceutical Care: Statement on Drug Therapy in the Elderly (2001)
Pharmaceutical Care: Statement on Drug Therapy in the Elderly

Published by the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists (CSHP), Ottawa, Ontario. 2001 edition. Use of this document was approved by CSHP Council in 2001.

Suggested citation:

© Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists 2001

All rights reserved. Publications of the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists can be obtained from:

30 Concourse Gate, Unit 3
Ottawa ON K2E 7V7
Telephone: 613.736.9733
Fax: 613.736.5660
Internet: www.cshp.ca

An electronic copy of this document is available, for personal use, to:

- members of CSHP, at CSHP’s website: www.cshp.ca
- non-members of CSHP at a cost, by contacting the Publications Administrator at the above address

Requests for permission to reproduce or translate CSHP publications – whether for sale or for non-commercial distribution – should be addressed to the CSHP Publications Administrator using the above contact information.

This publication represents the view of Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists and was approved after careful consideration of the evidence available. All reasonable precautions have been taken by the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists to verify the information contained in this publication.

The Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists is not a regulation-setting organization.

This published material is being distributed without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied. Although the intended primary application of this publication is stated in its introduction, it is important to note that it remains the responsibility of the user of the publication to judge its suitability for his or her particular purpose within the context of his or her practice and the applicable legislative framework. In no event shall the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists or any persons involved in the development and review of this publication be liable for damages arising from its use.

CSHP Official Publications are subject to periodic review, and suggestions for their improvement are welcomed. Where more than one version of a publication exists, the most recent version replaces the former version(s). Users of the CSHP’s publications are advised to check CSHP’s website for the most recent version of any publication.

All inquiries regarding this publication, including requests for interpretation, should be addressed to the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists using the above contact information.
Pharmaceutical Care: Statement on Drug Therapy in the Elderly

THE ELDERLY ARE AT PARTICULAR RISK FOR THE OCCURRENCE OF DRUG-RELATED PROBLEMS OFTEN DUE TO MULTIPLE DRUG THERAPY ASSOCIATED WITH MULTIPLE DISEASE STATES. CSHP ENDORSES THE IMPORTANCE OF PHARMACOTHERAPY ASSESSMENT IN THE ELDERLY.

Drug therapy is often associated with the development of drug-related problems which may lead to illness, hospitalization, or possibly death. Since physiological functions change with age, the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of medications may be altered. Adverse drug events may result if the above factors are not recognized and taken into consideration in the patient’s medication regimen.

Some of the common factors which can result in drug-related problems in the elderly include:

a) Communication problems due to sensory, cognitive and motor defects which may result in failure of the elderly to understand how and when to take their medications;

b) Complicated dosage regimens which may be difficult to understand and adhere to;

c) Self-medication and use of non-prescription medication which may lead to drug interactions and adverse effects; and

d) Inadequate explanation of the appropriate usage and benefits of the medication.

One role of the pharmacist in the care of the elderly patient is to ensure that the medication regimen achieves the desired therapeutic outcome with the lowest potential for adverse effects. It is also important that this therapy be provided at a reasonable cost to the patient.

Another goal of the pharmacist is to communicate medication information and to ensure that the patient understands the information. It is imperative that the elderly patient (or substitute decision-maker, if appropriate) be involved in the decision making process. The benefits of active involvement may include better adherence to the medication regimen as well as increased awareness and subsequent detection of adverse effects. Also, increased knowledge may prevent or reduce unnecessary problems when self-medicating with non-prescription medications.

In order to achieve the above goals, the pharmacist should provide comprehensive pharmaceutical care to the elderly patient whenever possible. The elderly should be recognized as one sector of the population which would benefit from monitoring by pharmacists. Their medication profiles should be monitored routinely for drug related problems and for optimization of pharmacotherapy.

Assessments of, and recommendations for, the patient’s therapy should be communicated to the physician and other health care providers. Open communication among the patient, the pharmacist, and other members of the health care team should be maintained to ensure optimal medication therapy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Guidelines to Optimize the Practice of Pharmaceutical Care in the Health Care Facility, Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists, Ottawa, Ontario, 2000.

Note: the title of this guideline was changed in 2009 to Pharmaceutical care: guidelines on optimizing the practice of pharmaceutical care in the healthcare facility.

Guiding principles for enhancing the likelihood of positive medication use outcomes in geriatric patients. A position statement of the United States

CSHP Mission:
CSHP is the national voice of pharmacists committed to the advancement of safe, effective medication use and patient care in hospitals and related healthcare settings.
Pharmaceutical Care: Statement on Drug Therapy in the Elderly


Note: the title of this statement was changed in 2009 to Pharmaceutical Care: Statement.