

More than half of persons with Alzheimer's disease aged 90 years or more use psychotropic drugs

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Psychotropic drug use is rather common among persons aged 90 years or more diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, compared with those who were diagnosed at younger age, concludes a study conducted at the University of Eastern Finland. Persons aged 90 years or more used antipsychotics five times more often and antidepressants 2.5 times more often than those without the disease in the same age group. The results were published in *Age and Ageing*.

56 percent of persons aged 90 years or more with Alzheimer's disease used [psychotropic drugs](#), whereas the same figure was 48 percent among younger persons with Alzheimer's disease and 38 percent among those aged 90 years or more but without Alzheimer's disease. Psychotropic drugs include antipsychotics, antidepressants and benzodiazepines and related drugs, which are used for anxiety and insomnia in short-term treatment. On the contrary, persons aged 90 years or more with Alzheimer's disease used less frequently antidementia drugs (63 percent) when compared with younger persons with the same disease (72 percent).

Psychotropic drugs are related to significant risk of adverse effects among older users and for this reason, very frequent use of these drugs among the oldest persons is concerning. The need and safety of drug use should be regularly assessed.

Drug use was studied in the MEDALZ study cohort within six months after the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease in Finland. Data for 67,215 persons with Alzheimer's disease diagnosed during 2005-2011 and comparison persons with same age, gender and region of residence without the [disease](#) were derived from Finnish nationwide registers.

More information: Heidi Taipale et al. Drug use in persons with and without Alzheimer's disease aged 90 years or more, *Age and Ageing* (2016). [DOI: 10.1093/ageing/afw141](https://doi.org/10.1093/ageing/afw141)

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