

Risk of adverse medication reactions to people with COPD

January 15 2018



Credit: University of Glasgow

Those with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), together with other chronic illnesses, are at greater risk of adverse medication reactions, according to a new study.

The paper, led by the University of Glasgow and published in *BMJ Open*, found people with COPD, a long-term lung condition common in those who have smoked, are more likely to be prescribed multiple medications contributing to potential adverse effects like falls, bleeding, kidney

damage, constipation, urinary retention, and drowsiness.

People with COPD were more likely to have other [chronic illnesses](#) and to be simultaneously prescribed three or more drugs with similar potential side-effects.

The study used data from UK Biobank to examine the problem of multimorbidity (two or more long-term health conditions) and polypharmacy (multiple medications).

Many of the medications contributing to the risks of [adverse reactions](#) were used to treat the associated chronic illnesses, rather than COPD itself. Having multiple chronic illnesses appeared to put people with COPD at greater risk of potential adverse drug reactions.

Lead author Peter Hanlon said: "Our work shows that co-prescription of drugs with the potential for various adverse drug reactions is common."

Corresponding author Frances Mair, Norie Miller Professor of General Practice at the Institute of Health and Wellbeing, added: "Our findings are important because it highlights the need for future research to examine the effects of this on healthcare outcomes.

"Going forward clinical guidelines need to start emphasising the importance of the assessment of multimorbidity and [adverse drug reaction](#) risk."

More information: Examining patterns of multimorbidity, polypharmacy and risk of adverse drug reactions in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease: a cross-sectional UK biobank study. *BMJ Open*

Provided by University of Glasgow

Citation: Risk of adverse medication reactions to people with COPD (2018, January 15)
retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-01-adverse-medication-reactions-people-copd.html>

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