



# The eleven best medications for reducing pressure on emergency care services

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Evidence-based, guideline-supported medications that reduce emergency admissions		
	<b>Heart failure</b>	Angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors Angiotensin-II receptor blockers Aldosterone receptor antagonists Digoxin
	<b>Stable coronary artery disease</b>	Intensive statin therapy
	<b>Acute asthma in the emergency department</b>	Early inhaled corticosteroids Anticholinergics
	<b>Chronic obstructive</b>	Long-acting muscarinic antagonists

Evidence-based, guideline-supported medications that reduce emergency care admissions Credit: University of Oxford

The most effective medicines for preventing emergency hospital admissions have been identified by a team of researchers in Oxford University's Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences. Reporting in *BMC Medicine*, the authors suggest these treatments could

be considered for inclusion in quality monitoring and improvement strategies.

The researchers reviewed data from nearly 2,000 drug trials and 1 million patients. They identified eleven commonly used medications that significantly reduce emergency admission rates in patients with major [chronic diseases](#), such as heart failure, asthma, and chronic [obstructive pulmonary disease](#).

The study's lead author, DPhil Student Nik Bobrovitz, says this is a key step towards reducing emergency care pressures.

"We need to reduce demand on emergency services, which are currently stretched to their limit. Past initiatives have failed. We decided to examine the issue from a unique and simple perspective.

"In patients with chronic diseases, medications can help to manage symptoms and prevent flare-ups that would otherwise require urgent health care. These medications we highlighted are highly effective at helping people better deal with their disease and stay out of the hospital."

The UK-based researchers suggest their study has implications for [health systems](#) all over the world.

"In most health systems there are programs to track whether highly effective interventions are being used appropriately. When they aren't being properly used, efforts are made to improve their use. The eleven medications we identified should be part of these programs. We know from previous studies that these drugs are not always prescribed to patients that need them and, often, are prescribed in too low a dose."

The researchers hope their work will help to ease the burden on [emergency services](#).

"We believe our research will help to improve patient care. It will also

make important progress in better managing [emergency](#) hospital admissions. This is a simple strategy that has been overlooked. We believe it can be an effective solution to a complex problem."

**More information:** Niklas Bobrovitz et al. Medications that reduce emergency hospital admissions: an overview of systematic reviews and prioritisation of treatments, *BMC Medicine* (2018). [DOI: 10.1186/s12916-018-1104-9](#)

Provided by Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences,  
University of Oxford

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