

New GSA resource provides guidance for safe use of OTC analgesics by older adults

July 17 2018

The latest issue in the From Policy to Practice report series from The Gerontological Society of America (GSA) addresses recent labeling changes for OTC analgesics and highlights important considerations when recommending the use of these products in older adults.

"Pain management in [older adults](#) is challenging and frequently managed with OTC analgesics such as acetaminophen and NSAIDs," said GSA member Keela Herr, Ph.D., RN, FGSA, AGSF, FAAN, who served as a faculty advisor for the new publication.

Adults 65 years of age and older use more prescription and OTC medications than any other demographic group and are significantly more likely to experience an [adverse drug reaction](#) than younger adults.

"This resource provides the gerontological community with straightforward and practical advice to help support safe use of OTC analgesics by older adults," said Herr, who serves as co-director of the Csomay Center for Gerontological Excellence at the University of Iowa.

While pain affects approximately one-third of Americans—and exacts a huge toll from society in terms of morbidity, mortality, disability, demands on the health care system, and economic burden—it is often not adequately managed. GSA's new publication provides an overview of the need for a thorough evaluation, development of a care plan, and details about nonprescription treatment options.

The publication focuses on an analysis of safety risks associated with OTC analgesics, including cardiovascular risks, gastrointestinal risks, and renal risks. Information from national and international treatment guidelines for the use of OTC analgesics in older adults, and details regarding recent labeling changes for OTC analgesics, is provided.

Key messages from the Food and Drug Administration's Safe Use Initiative, which has addressed several issues relating to the use of acetaminophen and NSAIDs, are also shared. Additionally, the issue provides guidance to clinicians regarding how to educate older [adults](#) to use OTC analgesics appropriately and safely.

GSA launched its From Policy to Practice series to promote the translation of policy into meaningful health outcomes. The new issue, titled "An Interdisciplinary Look at Labeling Changes to OTC Analgesics and the Implications for Patient Care," was supported by an educational grant from Johnson & Johnson Consumer Inc.

More information: www.geron.org/publications/from-policy-to-practice

Provided by The Gerontological Society of America

Citation: New GSA resource provides guidance for safe use of OTC analgesics by older adults (2018, July 17) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-07-gsa-resource-guidance-safe-otc.html>

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