

Thirty-three percent of people on anticoagulants take OTC supplements with potentially serious interactions

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Nearly 98% percent of people prescribed direct-acting oral anticoagulants such as apixaban used over-the-counter products. Of

those, 33% took at least one such product that, in combination with the anticoagulants, could cause dangerous internal bleeding. People on these medications largely lacked knowledge of some potentially serious interactions.

Direct-acting [oral anticoagulants](#) are the drug of choice for stroke prevention in patients with [atrial fibrillation](#), which occurs most frequently in [older patients](#). Apixaban is one of the most frequently prescribed. However, most people prescribed apixaban or other direct-acting oral anticoagulants are not followed in specialized anticoagulation clinics or monthly by health care professionals. As a result, these people may not be aware of potential drug interactions.

The researchers surveyed 791 English- and Spanish-speaking patients from April to October 2018 who had been prescribed apixaban about their knowledge of potential interactions between the drug and over-the-counter supplements. They were asked about how often they took aspirin, ibuprofen/naproxen, and acetaminophen, and 13 common dietary supplements, including Chinese herbs, various fish oils, ginger and herbal teas, while also taking apixaban.

Limitations to the study included a low response rate (33%), self-reported data, which can be unreliable due to faulty memories, and the researchers focused on a limited number of dietary supplements.

Because such a large number of people lack knowledge of these interactions, there is a need to educate patients and [healthcare providers](#) about the dangers that these combinations may pose. In addition, data are needed on outcomes in people combining apixaban and over-the-counter products.

The study is published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

Provided by University of California, Los Angeles

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