



Scotland PBSG Learning Programme



The Foundation for Medical Practice Education

Practice Based Small Group Learning (PBSG) International

McMaster University
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RUGS AND THE ELDERLY

As people age — and the risk of chronic conditions increases — they tend to take more medications, increasing the risk for serious adverse effects, drug interactions and non-compliance. The use of inappropriate drug therapy rises, so too does the underuse of potentially beneficial medicines. Judicious attention to the risk-benefit balance of different medication regimens in individual patients can prevent severe drug reactions and improve the overall wellbeing of older patients.

This module aims to:

- improve awareness of important drug interactions, drugs that are underused and drugs that should be avoided in elderly patients.
- outline strategies to review and tailor the most appropriate treatment regimen to optimize function for elderly patients.
- promote the consideration of individual patient factors (e.g., comorbid disease, patient goals) that require clear communication with regards to risks and benefits.

CASES

Case 1: Anna, female, age 88

Anna is new to your practice and is seeing you today to help with her sleep, fatigue and pain. She had a fall in her bungalow and fractured her rib three months ago. Though she had been managing fairly well, she has moved to be closer to her daughter who can keep an eye on her. Anna is now living in a flat for the elderly with some help from social services who provide carers. She dislikes the carers as they never do what she wants, and there seems to be a different one every day. Her daughter describes her mother as critical and unhappy. Anna complains of daytime fatigue and poor sleep, stating that she sleeps for four hours then is up all night. She suffers from constipation and her appetite is poor. She has pain in her shoulders and knees.