



Medication Reduction to 8 Per Resident

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The over use of medications has reached significant levels in our nation. One of the greatest populations of people affected is geriatrics. Knowing this, we chose to decrease the average number of medications our resident received to eight or less per day.

When residents receive multiple medications there is an increased risk of adverse reactions. Some of which are: Side effects of the medication, medication to medication interaction, residents having to swallow multiple medications at one time. Having knowledge of this we, as the medication administration team, began to seek ways to decrease the number of medication each resident received.

The facility pharmacist observed possible risk of adverse reactions to some residents in the facility. The observation was shared with the Director of Nursing who then summoned the Assistant Director of Nursing, Social Services Director, Pharmacist and the facility Medical Directors to form the medication reduction team. Because every resident is at risk for multiple medications, all residents were included in our reduction protocol.

The team first gathered every Medication Administration record (MAR) and viewed each one individually. Each resident that received nine or medications were then placed in the possible reduction group. Once the candidates were selected for reduction the process began on a case by case basis. The team initially gathered all the pertinent information for each candidate, and used all medical histories and data collected to determine if the candidate was appropriate for a reduction trial. Each medication was scrutinized for effectiveness, possible interactions, and usefulness for the geriatric population. Once the initial trial reductions were made, any positive or negative results were discussed during the multi-disciplinary morning team meeting. The medication reduction team continues to meet each month to continue to monitor our progress.

When the team initially met to discuss the benefits of reducing the risks to our residents by way of eliminating the over use of medication, our medication to resident ratio was significantly greater than eight and has now been safely reduced to an average eight (8) meds or less per resident. The overall reduction in medication has helped in reducing the risk of hospital admissions due to overmedication, or drug interaction. It has also increase the quality of life for the residents in our facility. The nursing staff has more time engaged with our residents as a whole instead of using so much time during the day and night to pass medications.

The reduction of medications per resident has had a positive effect on our resident population. It has overall increased the quality of life for the resident and created a "home like" environment. Not only has it been a positive change for the resident but also to nursing staff. Nurses are no longer focused on giving multiple medications but have time to provide more individualized care for the resident. The effects are not only physically sound but financially prudent as well. For these reasons we have chosen the reduction of medications as a "Best Practice".