

Who are ACER?

We are a team of clinical and non-clinical researchers based within the Institute of Applied Health Sciences, University of Aberdeen.

We aim to increase understanding of several conditions that affect people in older age, such as dementia, stroke, cardiovascular disease and hypertension.

Through this we aim to improve the health and care of older people whilst promoting their wellbeing.



Examples of Anticholinergic Medications:

Antihistamines

- Cetirizine
- Chlorphenamine

Bladder Medications

- Oxybutynin

Pain Relief Medications

- Amitriptyline
- Codeine
- Dihydrocodeine

Diuretic/ Water tablets

- Furosemide

Stomach/ Indigestion Medications

- Ranitidine (Zantac)

Irritable Bowel/ Nausea Medications

- Loperamide (Imodium)

Antidepressants

- Most antidepressants



ANTICHOLINERGIC MEDICATIONS:

What should I know?



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Anticholinergic medications:

What are they?

Medications that block the actions of the chemical acetylcholine are known as anticholinergic medications. Acetylcholine is an important chemical that allows communication between individual cells in the body. These communications help to maintain body temperature, control muscle contractions, and remember old and new memories.

Sometimes these drugs are chosen specifically for their ability to block acetylcholine. Other times, blocking this chemical is an unwanted side-effect.

These medications have a number of side effects including dry mouth, drowsiness, confusion and memory problems. These side effects are more likely to be experienced by older adults.

Anticholinergic medications:

What do they treat?

Medications with these properties are used to treat a range of conditions including:

- Allergies
- Asthma
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Depression
- Diarrhoea
- Insomnia
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Motion sickness
- Muscle spasms
- Overactive bladder and urinary incontinence
- Parkinson's disease
- Vomiting



Anticholinergic medications:

Why the attention?

Our team's research has shown that taking more anticholinergic medications are linked to a person's risk of heart attack, dementia, falls and death. By minimising the number of anticholinergic medications a person takes, we think we may be able to reduce this risk and improve overall health and wellbeing. However, strong evidence to support this is not yet available.

Talk to your doctor if you have concerns about your anticholinergic medicines or you are experiencing unusual side effects.

For more information please visit www.abdn.ac.uk/iahs/research/acer/anticholinergic-medications-1984.php

