

# Medication-related harm in older adults is common, costly, and preventable

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New research indicates that harm from medicines is common in older adults following hospital discharge, and it results in substantial use of healthcare resources. In the *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* study, medication-related harm affected 1 in 3 older adults following hospital discharge, of which 50 percent was potentially preventable.

In the study of 1280 [older adults](#) from 5 [teaching hospitals](#) in Southern England, failure to take medications properly was implicated in one-quarter of cases of medication harm. The cost to the NHS of post-discharge medication harm in older adults was estimated at £396 million, of which over 90 percent was attributable to hospital readmissions.

"As the use of medicines in the ageing population is rapidly increasing, it's vital that we improve awareness among clinicians of the harm that medicines commonly cause," said Prof. Rajkumar, senior investigator and Chair of Geriatrics and Stroke Medicine at Brighton and Sussex Medical School in the UK. "The risk-to-benefit analysis is particularly complex in the older population. Any decision to prescribe medicines should be made in close collaboration with patients and carers, with a tentative stop date and with monitoring of correct usage and adverse reactions."

**More information:** Nikesh Parekh et al, Incidence and cost of medication harm in older adults following hospital discharge: A multicentre prospective study in the UK, *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/bcp.13613](https://doi.org/10.1111/bcp.13613)

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