

MEDICATION OPTIMIZATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN INPATIENT CARE

Common Prescribing Cascades



This resource provides examples of common prescribing cascades, which occur when a drug is prescribed to manage the side effects of another drug.

INITIAL MEDICATION	ADVERSE DRUG EVENT (ADE) FROM THE INITIAL MEDICATION	SECOND MEDICATION ORDERED TO MANAGE ADE
Urinary anticholinergic	Agitation	Antipsychotic or benzodiazepine
Benzodiazepine or tricyclic antidepressants	Cognitive Impairment	Cholinesterase inhibitors
Cholinesterase inhibitors	Urinary incontinence	Anticholinergic medication
Sodium-glucose co-transporter-2 inhibitors (SLGT2i)	Urinary incontinence	Overactive bladder medication
Diuretics	Hypokalemia	Potassium Supplements
Diuretics	Urinary incontinence	Overactive bladder medication
Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)	Hypertension	Antihypertensives
Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)	Gastric ulcer or bleed	Proton pump inhibitor
Gabapentin	Pedal edema	Diuretic medication
Calcium Channel Blockers	Constipation	Laxative
Calcium Channel Blockers	Pedal edema	Diuretic medication
Thiazide-like diuretics	Hyperuricemia	Anti-gout medications
Metoclopramide	Extrapyramidal symptoms	Antiparkinsonian medication
Dopaminergic antiparkinsonian agents	Orthostatic hypotension	Vasopressors

INITIAL MEDICATION

ADVERSE DRUG EVENT (ADE) FROM THE INITIAL MEDICATION

SECOND MEDICATION ORDERED TO MANAGE ADE

Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors
or selective serotonin norepinephrine
reuptake inhibitors

Insomnia

Sleep agents
(i.e. benzodiazepines, sedating
antidepressants, benzodiazepine
receptor agonist, melatonin)

Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors
or selective serotonin norepinephrine
reuptake inhibitors

Agitation

Antipsychotics or benzodiazepines

Dopaminergic antiparkinsonian agents

Psychotic symptoms,
hallucinations

Antipsychotics

Antipsychotic

Extrapyramidal symptoms

Antiparkinsonian medication

Alpha-1-receptor blockers

Orthostatic hypotension

Vestibular sedatives
(i.e. betahistine, antihistamines,
benzodiazepines)

Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors

Erectile dysfunction

PDE5 inhibitor

Beta-Blocker

Erectile dysfunction

PDE5 inhibitor

Narcotic

Constipation

Laxative

Proton Pump Inhibitor

Low Vitamin B12

Vitamin B12 supplementation

Acetylsalicylic Acid

Gastric ulcer or bleed

Gastroprotective agent

Angiotensin Converting Enzyme
Inhibitors (ACEi)

Cough

Cough remedy
(i.e. antibiotics, cough
suppressant, bronchodilator)

Amiodarone

Hypothyroidism

Thyroid hormones

HMG Co-A Reductase inhibitors

Myalgia or myositis

Pain relievers

Anticoagulants or Antiplatelets

Gastric ulcer or bleed

Gastroprotective agent

Corticosteroids

Insomnia

Sleep agents
(i.e. benzodiazepines, sedating
antidepressants, benzodiazepine
receptor agonist, melatonin)

Corticosteroids

Hyperglycemia

Antihyperglycemic agents

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