

What is Polypharmacy?

The administration of more medications than clinically required or appropriate.^{1,2}
 Although the number of medications is an important consideration,
 the focus is the appropriateness and safety of the medications.

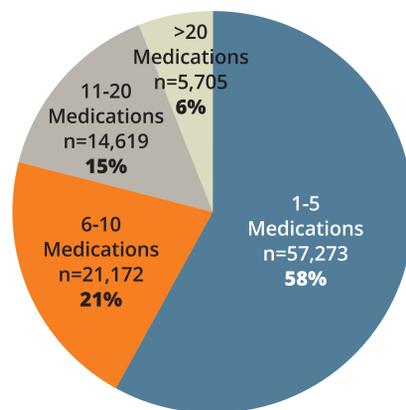


Why is Polypharmacy a Concern?

- Elders may experience more adverse effects than younger people and may not present with the common adverse effects identified for the medication.³
- The adverse effects of anticholinergic medications could contribute to falls, anxiety, delirium and reversible cognitive impairment.⁴
- Adverse effects can lead to hospitalizations and /or functional decline.⁵
- The number of medications increases the risk for adverse effects exponentially.

Percentage of First Nations People Receiving Multiple Medications in 2015⁸

n = 98,769 People



How can we Reduce Polypharmacy?

There are numerous types of medications which can be successfully discontinued and replaced with non-drug therapies. The result can lead to a feeling of improved wellness. Consider these steps to provide a meaningful medication review.^{1,6}

- Seek client consent
- Confirm goals of care, co-morbidity & frailty
- Collect assessments; include client perspective
- Evaluate risks & benefits; confirm indications; time for benefit
- Develop plan for reduction; stop; start; monitoring

What is FNHA doing about Polypharmacy?

Community healthcare services are encouraged to develop process and strategies for:

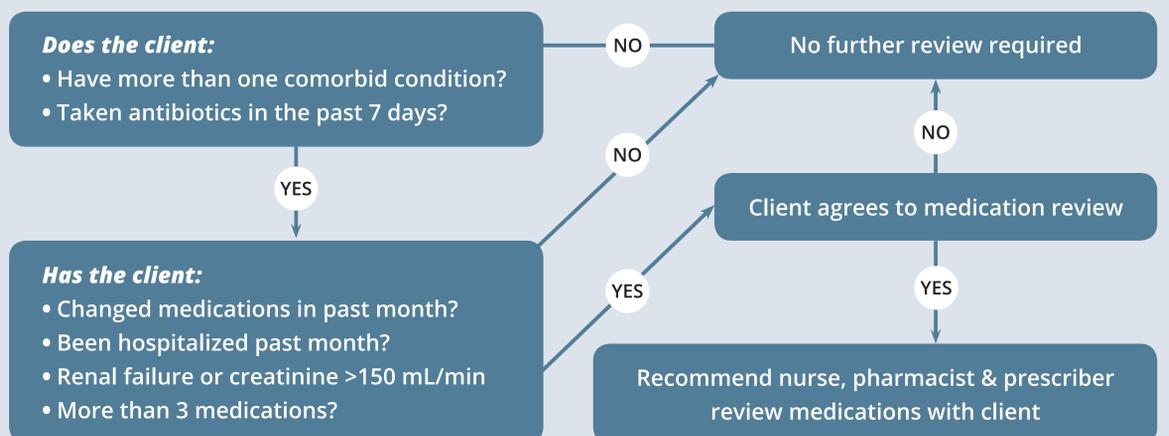
- Best Possible Medication History (Medication Reconciliation)
- Meaningful medication reviews every six months for individuals at risk for polypharmacy
- High functioning clinical teams

What do we hope to achieve?

- Increased community and individual wellness
- Decreased number of different medications at lowest effective dose
- Decreased unscheduled emergency room visits and hospital stays
- Decreased medication related adverse effects
- Decreased falls for Elders

Who is Responsible for Polypharmacy Reduction?

It takes a team to reduce the risk of polypharmacy. The members should at least include: the client, nurse, prescriber and pharmacist. Each team member has a unique role to contribute.⁷ The nurse is in a pivotal role to identify the need for a medication review.



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First Nations Health Authority
 Health through wellness