



ABSTRACTS: [VOLUME 1, SPECIAL ISSUE S1](#).

ABSTRACT

Evaluation and Challenges of Polypharmacy in Palestinian Clinical of Chronic Disease

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Published in September 2019

Polypharmacy is defined as the concurrent use of multiple medications including prescription and over-the-counter drugs. This can result in potential inappropriate drug use and increase the risk of drug-drug interactions. In Palestine, the elderly population is estimated to be 2.9% of the general population and is known to have high prevalence of chronic diseases and thus the high prevalence of polypharmacy. This cross sectional study was conducted to evaluate polypharmacy among geriatrics in East Jerusalem; 100 patients aged 60 or older (59% male and 41% female) were interviewed in the chronic disease clinic in the Jerusalem Health Directorate and all their prescriptions examined. Also, their doctors were interviewed. The interviews covered factors that may affect the possibility of polypharmacy including diseases and demographic factors such as age; educational level. Results show that 57% of patients were from (60 -69) age group, 52% were married and 21% illiterate; 44% smokers and 97% were coffee drinkers. Prevalence of polypharmacy were 100% (more than 3 drugs); 22% had excessive polypharmacy (more than 10 drugs); 26% of the patients had their last visit since more than 3 months. Most importantly, 73% of the patients feel difficult in taking their medicines and polypharmacy also makes 81% of them forget taking their medicines on time. Morbidity of different disease of the study population was studied and all their drugs were discussed with their doctors; results show 27% of the patients took their lowest effective dose. Several statistical relationships were examined; some prove the relationship between polypharmacy as a real cause of patients suffering and difficulties that prevent them to adhere on their medical schedule on time. This study emphasizes the need for a better control on polypharmacy among elderly and the importance to develop care strategies to resolve problems and difficulties patients suffer.

PalStudent Journal

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