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Drug interactions: A crucial issue in treatment of patients with Alzheimer's disease

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Introduction: One of the crucial consequences of aging population is the higher prevalence of age related disorders. Hence, polypharmacy and its negative impact is an inevitable phenomenon of this change in the health condition of the elderly in general and Alzheimer's disease (AD) specifically. Considering the importance of drug interactions in these frail patients, it seems that the professionals who work in this field should pay more attention into this issue, especially in the developing countries with limited resources in their health system.

Aim: Our goal has been to provide a practical and available brief study about important drug interactions with Alzheimer's medications for professionals who work in the field of dementia.

Method: The PubMed and Elsevier databases were searched for surveys published over the recent five years. Other applicable resources like UpToDate subscription based resource database and American Geriatric Society Updated Beers Criteria were used. The interaction between acetylcholinesterase inhibitors (AChEIs) and memantine with the current medications which are prescribed for the treatment of common chronic disorders in the elderly patients with AD have been studied. We have selected medications which are allowed to be used in aged patients with AD. Therefore, the medications which are contraindicated or should be avoided (like clidinium-C and cimetidine) have not been included in this review.

Results: We have listed the drug interactions between AChEIs and memantine with medications used for common chronic disorders in patients with AD. Several tables have been designed to show these interactions in the diverse classes of medications.

Conclusion: An interdisciplinary "geriatric assessment" is essential for a comprehensive evaluation of the prescriptions in the patients with AD who receive AChEIs and memantine. Moreover, raising awareness of the professionals and families about careful drug regimen review is essential to identify potentially inappropriate or hazardous medications to modify the treatment protocol. This assessment might reduce the length of hospital admissions, related costs and patient mortality and morbidity.

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