General Aging in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The Role of Polypharmacy

Presented by Julie A. Moran, DO
Geriatrician, Aging and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Specialist
Consultant, Tewksbury Hospital and Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services
Clinical Instructor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School
Polypharmacy

- Medical care gets more complex and possibly more fragmented with age

- Routine review of the medication list is essential!

- As individuals age they take on multiple specialists/prescribers, who may or may not communicate with one another

- To be safe, assume they DON’T

- Reassess regularly – is the medication necessary? Do the benefits outweigh the risks? Is there room to simplify?
Medications, Medications....

- **Look out for:**
  - Anticholinergic medications (ex: benadryl, bladder medications, etc.)
  - Sedating, long acting medications
  - Medications that have therapeutic levels that require monitoring
  - The prescribing cascade: medication B prescribed to address the side effects of medication A
  - Overlapping or conflicting medications – occurs frequently when providers don’t communicate or if med lists are not carefully updated
Keep in mind: Nonpharmacologic strategies for behavioral issues are frequently underutilized.

Is there any room to solve/improve this problem without adding another medication?

Could the best step actually be removal of an offensive medication rather than adding another one?

Advocate for making only one medication change at a time to allow cleaner assessment of its impact, good or bad.
Additional Webinars on Aging with IDD

General Aging in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Understanding Age Related Changes
- The Role of Polypharmacy
- Identifying and Assessing Pain
- Behavior Related Changes and Aging in Adults with IDD
- Health Promotion and Aging in Adults with IDD
- Mobility and Aging in Adults with IDD
- Aging with Down Syndrome
- Aging and Cerebral Palsy

Dementia and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Introduction to Dementia and Aging with IDD
- Early Evaluation of Dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease
- Stages of Alzheimer’s Disease
- Applying the Knowledge to Dementia Caregiving and Caregiver Support
- Caregiving in Action: Case Studies and Practical Tips
Additional Aging with IDD Resources

Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

Center for Developmental Disabilities Evaluation & Research
http://shriver.umassmed.edu/cdder/aging_idd_education
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cdder@umassmed.edu