

High Emergency Department Users: Older Adults with Diabetes and Prescription Medications | Alberta

What is the Issue?

Older adults with diabetes frequently have at least one more chronic condition and are likely to use multiple medications. Understanding what medications are being used is important to ensuring that they are being used to maximize benefit and minimize potential harm.

Key Features of this Study:

Using health data from Alberta, two groups were identified:

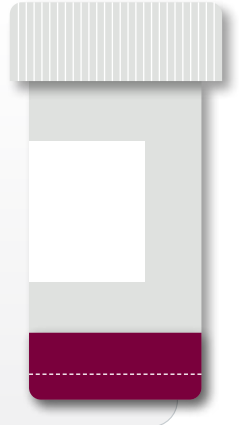
- 1) High-Emergency Department User Group:** All community-living older adults living with diabetes with the most emergency department visits in a year.
- 2) Population-Based Group:** A random sample of community-living older adults living with diabetes.



Did you know?

21%

Of those in the High-Emergency Department User Group were prescribed **4 or more** antibiotics compared to 8% in the Population-Based Group.



The **High-Emergency Department User Group** and the **Population-Based Group** were compared on the prescription medications they used.

Shown below is the frequency of selected medications for each group.

	High-Emergency Department User Group		Population-Based Group	
62%	Statins	63%		
49%	Diuretics	32%		
45%	Metformin	50%		
29%	Antidepressants	16%		
27%	Insulin	16%		
25%	Dpp4s ↓ Dipeptidyl peptidase - 4 Inhibitors	8%		



Key Messages: Implications for Clinical Practice and Policy Considerations

- The use of several medications, known as polypharmacy, was common among older adults with diabetes and included both medications for diabetes and other conditions.
- Regular and thorough medication reviews should be provided to older adults with diabetes to ensure that they are receiving the right medications for their needs and that potential drug interactions have been considered.

A comprehensive long-term strategy needs to be developed that focuses on all of these factors.

This infographic was developed on behalf of the ACHRU-CPP Research Team in collaboration with Lynne Mansell (patient/caregiver public partner) and Paige Blainey (ACHRU trainee). References available upon request. | achru.mcmaster.ca