Polypharmacy in Connecticut in 2018: Opioids Are Not The Only Issue

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What is Polypharmacy?

• Simultaneous use of multiple medication
• Of concern if 5 or more medications are used
Why is Polypharmacy a Concern?

• Medications approved based on studies excluding:
  – Those on other medications
  – 65+ year olds

• Interactions and side effects increase with number taken

• Often, no “master list” of active medications exists:
  – Multiple providers, each writing prescriptions
  – Providers often unaware of other prescriptions
  – Patients and caregivers may go to multiple pharmacies and are often confused about medications
How Common Is Polypharmacy?
Proportion of US Adults Affected

Polypharmacy Projections* 2014-2022

*Linear extrapolation of Kantor data
How is Connecticut Affected?

• Based on projections: 1 in 5 Adults in Connecticut experience polypharmacy
  – Among 20-39 years: 1 in 25
  – Among 40-64 years: 1 in 5
  – Among 65+ years: 1 in 2
How Does Polypharmacy Compare to Prescription Opioids?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in Years</th>
<th>Opioid Prescriptions*</th>
<th>5+ Prescriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-34</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-64</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on person-year data reported by Centers for Disease Control 2016
What Outcomes Are Associated with Polypharmacy?

- Falls and fractures
- Dementia and delirium
- Adverse drug events
  - Drug-drug interactions
  - Side effects exacerbating other health conditions
- Hospitalizations
- Mortality
- Expense (often born by the patient)