

Sydney Springer: Working with Doctors on Deprescribing
“The Academic Minute”
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Narrator:

On University of New England Week — Medications don't come without risks and side effects. I'm Dr. Lynn Pascarella, president of the American Association of Colleges and Universities, and today on “The Academic Minute,” Sydney Springer, assistant professor of pharmacy, explains why some would rather go without the drugs.

Sydney Springer:

In a small study a student and I conducted in 2021, we found that an overwhelming portion of participating older adult community dwelling Mainers were interested in de-prescribing.

De-prescribing is a supervised process of stopping or reducing medications where the risk of a medication outweighs the benefit of continuing it. De-prescribing is aimed at reducing medications that place our patients at risk.

Those with a large number of medications, known as polypharmacy, are more likely to be on inappropriate medications, have more drug interactions, and experience more emergency department visits and hospitalizations.

In our study, 84% of survey participants indicated they would be interested in stopping one or more of their medications if their provider said it was possible.

In this survey, we also found that about a third of participants were interested in stopping a medication to see how they felt. About a third indicated they felt like they would be missing out on future benefits if they stopped their medications, and about a third would be reluctant to stop their medications that they have been taking for a long time. Almost everyone disagreed that, if a provider stopped their medications, they would feel that their doctor was giving up on them.

This study tells us that as providers, physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and even pharmacists in some states, we have the potential to educate our patients about appropriate medications. We can educate about the likely limited long-term benefits of some medications and the harms of others. Our patients have a lot of faith in us as medical experts, and they are ready to discuss de-prescribing as a part of their health care experience.

Narrator:

That was Sydney Springer of the University of New England. You can find this, other segments, and more information about the professors at academicminute.org.

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