

Talking Medicines: conversations about medicines between people living with dementia and their families



Many people with dementia are prescribed multiple medicines - a situation known as polypharmacy, which can be problematic if risks of medicines outweigh the benefits, or if the patient is overburdened with medicines.

To tackle problematic polypharmacy, guidelines recommend Medicines Optimisation, 'a person-centred approach to safe and effective medicines use' that includes patients' beliefs and experiences in medicines decisions. However, we know little about medicines practices of people with dementia.



What did we do?

This research looked at observations of people with dementia and family carers at home, video-recordings of their conversations, participant diaries and interviews. It shed light onto the nuances of the identities and practices of people with dementia and carers in relation to medicine activities



How will it help?

Attention to the narratives of people with dementia, and the role of families in supporting autonomy can help prescribers orient to important values and beliefs around optimal medicines-taking. We will be developing range of resources that will include:

- Anonymised vignettes from the research about how people with dementia and their families manage medicines at home, including examples of communication 'pinch points' and highlighting the skills and knowledge that other carers have developed in supporting medicines.
- Offering a range of communicative responses that carers might use. These will not be prescriptive, but offer 'transportable tips' drawn from the research that carers might like to consider.

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