

Substance Abuse Awareness

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outline

- ◉ What is substance abuse
- ◉ How to recognize substance abuse in seniors
- ◉ Why are seniors more at risk for interactions
- ◉ How do alcohol-medication interactions occur
- ◉ What are common interactions
- ◉ How can a pharmacist help



substance abuse

- What

- Excessive use of a substance, including alcohol and other drugs

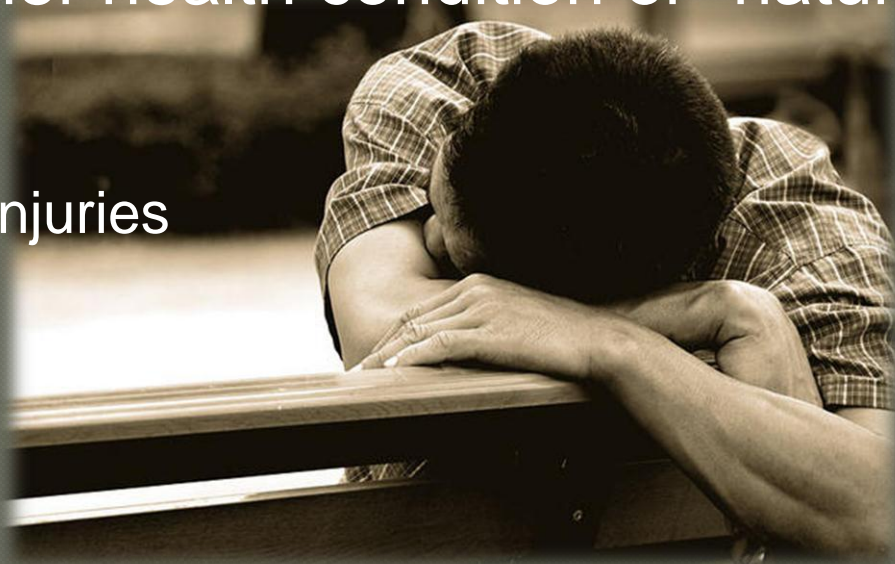
- Why is it a concern

- Negative effect on health and others
- Many interactions
 - Drug-Drug
 - Smoking-Drug
 - Alcohol-Drug



identifying substance abuse

- Usual red flags for substance abuse may not be present for your loved ones
 - E.g. change in employment or withdrawal from society
- Signs of substance abuse in seniors can often be mistaken for another health condition or “natural” signs of aging
 - Memory loss
 - Frequent falls and injuries
 - Chronic diarrhea
 - Fluctuating moods
 - Malnutrition
 - Isolation



alcohol – medication interactions... stats

- Over 5,000 prescription drugs available in Canada
- Doctors write about 250 million prescriptions a year
- About 17,000 medications available without prescriptions
- About 70% of the adult population drink at least occasionally, 10% drink daily

About 10% of those age 60 or older living in the community abuse alcohol

- It is estimated that alcohol-medication interactions may be a factor in about 25% of all emergency room visits

seniors and medications

- Higher number of medications
- Physiological changes as we get older
 - Change in body composition
 - Reduced efficiency of kidneys
 - Changes in how the liver functions





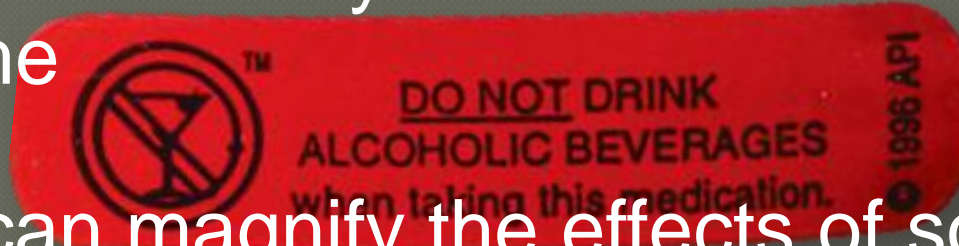
seniors and alcohol

- Alcohol absorbs faster and stays in the blood longer
 - The same amount of alcohol produces greater effect
 - Increased potential for interactions with medications
 - Increased risk of falls
 - May trigger or worsen medical conditions



how alcohol and medications interact

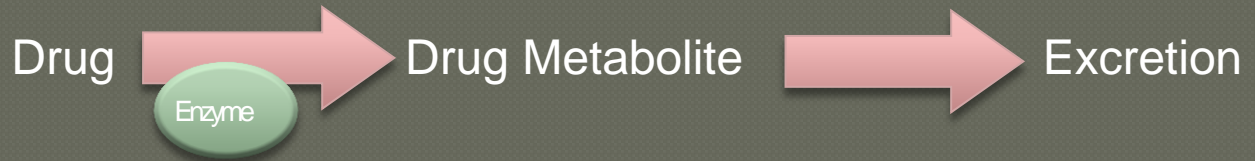
- Alcohol and medications can interact and be harmful even if they are **NOT** taken at the same time



- Alcohol can magnify the effects of some medications in the brain
 - Increased sedation, dizziness, depression
- Alcohol competes with some medications for the same set of enzymes in the liver
 - Alcohol and some medications have to be broken down by the liver

alcohol-medication interactions in the liver

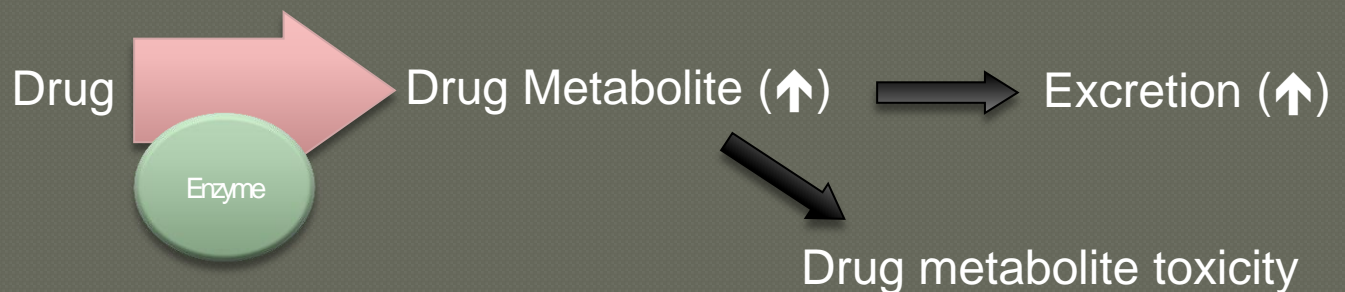
Absence of alcohol



Moderate alcohol consumption



Heavy drinkers
• when sober



Heavy drinkers
• when drunk



alcohol-medication interactions

continued

- Some medications can lead to an unpleasant reaction or result in serious medical consequences even after ingesting only a small amount of alcohol
 - Flushing
 - Nausea
 - Vomiting
 - Sweating
 - Rapid heartbeat
 - Low blood pressure
- Examples include
 - Metronidazole, sulfamet



classes of medications affected by alcohol

- Pain relief
- Antibiotics
- Blood thinners
- Diabetic medications
- Seizure medications
- Acid reducers
- Sedatives
- Muscle relaxants
- Antidepressants
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Herbas



how a pharmacist can help



- Information about your medical conditions
 - Knowledge of your medications
 - Monitoring the use of medications
 - Help make it easier to remember to take your medications
 - Advice on how to interpret information in the media
-
- MedsCheck – a complete review of your medications (including herbals) for efficacy and interactions

example MB

MB is a 72 year old female who is taking several medications, including warfarin and lorazepam.

She was admitted to the hospital after a fall and was found to have internal bleeding.

After further questioning, she admitted that she has been drinking.

- Alcohol increases the blood thinning qualities of warfarin
- Alcohol intensifies the dizziness and drowsiness from lorazepam

example LP

LP is a 46 year old male who has just been prescribed the antibiotic metranidazole, and although was advised not to drink any alcohol, he went to an office party and had a drink.

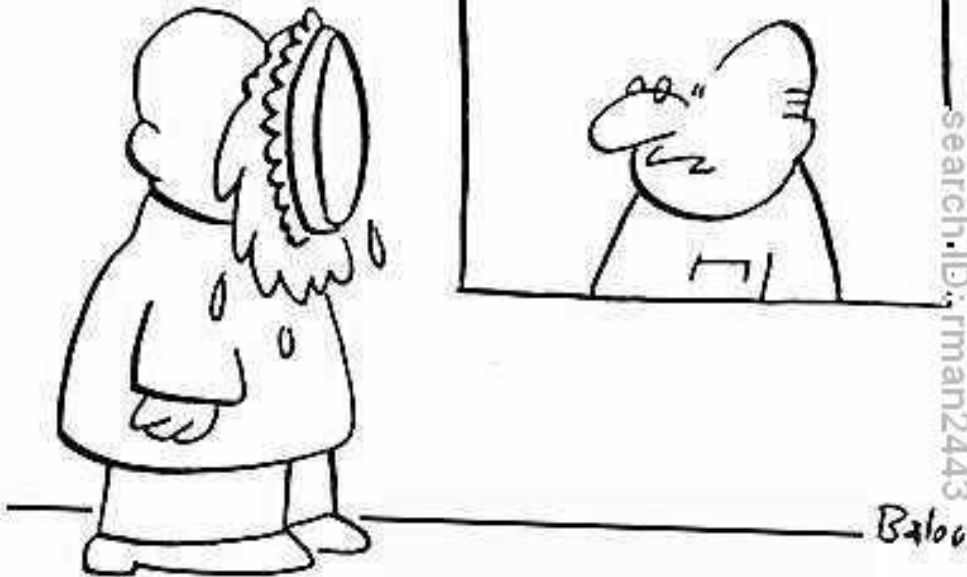
He then spent the night vomiting violently, sweating, and feeling extremely dizzy.

- If LP had a heart conditions, the situation could have been much worse and he could have ended up in the hospital

questions?

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Pharmacy



search-ID: rman2443

"Sorry, sir, but that's what your prescription seems to say."

Thank you

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