

Deprescribing guidelines for the elderly: How developmental evaluation is strengthening our process

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- OBJECTIVES:** Deprescribing guidelines are one solution to address inappropriate medication use. Optimal approaches to developing and implementing such guidelines with primary and long-term care practitioners have yet to be identified. We aimed to develop and implement three evidence-based deprescribing guidelines (proton pump inhibitors, benzodiazepines, antipsychotics). Our evaluation aims to provide an understanding of factors associated with successful guideline development, implementation, and uptake, and how developmental evaluation improves such processes.
- METHODS:** Guideline development using AGREE-II (Appraisal of Guidelines for Research and Evaluation), and GRADE (Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development, and Evaluation) to rate quality of evidence and strength of recommendations. Developmental evaluation using ethnographic methods: observations and interviews with guideline development and site implementation teams, and facilitated feedback sessions to discuss and agree on process improvements.
- RESULTS:** Two evidence-based deprescribing guidelines have been developed. Process components and resulting decision-aid algorithms will be presented. Factors that consistently facilitated successful development included team members' expertise in content/methods, access to additional expertise/resources through professional networks, and staff support. Development processes were modified for the 2nd and 3rd guidelines. Site implementation experience suggests practitioners are more interested in how to implement deprescribing approaches vs evidence to support stopping medications, that practice site priorities and processes shape ability to respond and that aligning guidelines with existing processes is critical to implementation success.
- CONCLUSIONS:** Optimizing a deprescribing guideline development and implementation process aims to facilitate clinicians' ability to reduce inappropriate medication use. Developmental evaluation contributes to improvement of processes used to develop and implement such guidelines.