A15 - Partnerships to put evidence into practice: Deprescribing antipsychotics in aged care

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BACKGROUND:
There are concerns about the high rate of antipsychotic use in residential aged care.

METHODS:
Southern Cross Care initiated a project to reduce the use of psychotropic medicines (PMs) across their 30 homes in NSW/ACT. They worked with academics and pharmacy services to plan and implement the program, drawing on the research literature. The program includes policy and procedural changes, training, audit and feedback and the creation of deprescribing teams to champion change within each facility. A behaviour of concern policy was introduced that required a 12-weekly review of antipsychotics by a GP. In order to support this, a behaviour of concern checklist was also implemented that set out the steps for management of behaviours, requiring that non-pharmacological approaches...
are first line management, and that environmental, pain and neuropsychiatric assessments, delirium screening, and behavioural, psychological symptoms of dementia consultations are conducted prior to any prescription of antipsychotics. Staff were trained in these new procedures. Deprescribing teams were set up to monitor and review antipsychotic effectiveness in individual residents. Webstercare collates and benchmarks NPS reports and this information is fed back to deprescribing teams. The team also worked with Alzheimer’s Australia NSW to create a video for GPs on deprescribing antipsychotics.

RESULTS:
The program is still in progress with medication use collected every three months for a year. After three months, overall antipsychotic use decreased from 19.13% (273/1427) of residents to 18.50% (264/1427).

DISCUSSION:
This project is an example of how industry and academics can work in partnership to use the research evidence to design and implement a program that successfully achieves practice improvement that will be sustained after the project concludes.