ASSESSING MEDICATION-RELATED PROBLEMS IN GERIATRIC PATIENTS: A STUDY IN A RURAL TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL

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ABSTRACT

Background: Medication-related problems (MRPs) are a significant concern among the geriatric population, particularly in rural tertiary care settings. The increasing prevalence of polypharmacy and inappropriate medication use in older adults leads to a higher risk of adverse drug reactions (ADRs), drug-drug interactions (DDIs), medication non-adherence, and therapeutic duplications. Age-related physiological changes further complicate medication safety, making pharmacist-led interventions crucial for improving therapeutic outcomes. However, limited data exist on the prevalence and management of MRPs in rural healthcare settings. **Objective:** This study aimed to assess the prevalence and types of MRPs among geriatric patients in a rural tertiary care hospital, identify contributing factors, and assess the effectiveness of pharmacist-led interventions in enhancing drug therapy and improving patient outcomes. **Methods:** A prospective, observational study was conducted over six months at a rural tertiary care hospital in India. Geriatric patients (≥65 years) receiving pharmacological treatment for chronic conditions were included. Data on demographics, medication history, comorbidities, and MRPs were collected and analyzed. MRPs were classified into categories such as inappropriate drug use, polypharmacy, ADRs, DDIs, and medication non-adherence. Pharmacist-led interventions including dose adjustments, medication discontinuation, alternative drug recommendations, and patient counselling were documented along with their acceptance rates. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests. **Results:** A total of 125 geriatric patients were included, with 57.6% males and 42.4% females. The majority (39.2%) belonged to the 65–70 years age group. Polypharmacy (≥5 medications) was observed in 19.2% of patients, increasing the risk of MRPs. Among the 244 identified MRPs, the most common were suspected ADRs (8.6%), drug-drug interactions (6.5%), and drug without indication (4.0%). Pharmacist interventions had a high acceptance rate, with patient counseling (95%) and alternative drug recommendations (85%) being the most accepted. Post-intervention outcomes showed that 44.31% of MRPs were completely resolved, while 18.18% were partially resolved, indicating a positive impact of pharmacist involvement in geriatric medication management. **Conclusion:** This study underscores the high prevalence of MRPs among geriatric patients and the critical role of pharmacists in mitigating medication-related risks through structured interventions. The findings suggest that pharmacist-led medication reviews, patient counseling, deprescribing strategies, and medication reconciliation significantly enhance medication safety and therapeutic outcomes in elderly patients. Given the statistically significant improvements in resolving MRPs, integrating pharmacists into geriatric care teams is essential to optimize pharmacotherapy and reduce preventable medication-related complications. The study highlights the need for structured pharmacist-driven medication management programs in rural tertiary care settings. Future research should focus on long-term interventions, follow-up strategies, and policy recommendations to further improve geriatric medication safety.

KEYWORDS: Medication-Related Problems, Polypharmacy, Geriatric Pharmacotherapy, Pharmacist Interventions, Adverse Drug Reactions, Drug-Drug Interactions, Rural Healthcare, Patient Counseling, Medication Safety, Deprescribing.

INTRODUCTION

1. Background and Significance: The global aging population has seen a dramatic increase, with individuals aged ≥ 65 years becoming a growing demographic worldwide. This increase is primarily due to advancements in healthcare, medical innovations, and increased life expectancy (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023). By 2050, it is anticipated that the number of individuals aged 60 years and older will reach approximately 2.1 billion, almost double the population of older adults today (United Nations, 2019). As individuals age, they experience various physiological changes, including declines in organ function (e.g., renal, hepatic), altered pharmacokinetics, and increased comorbidities, such as hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and osteoarthritis. These factors collectively lead to an elevated need for long-term pharmacotherapy to manage chronic diseases (Maher et al., 2014).

However, while medications are essential for managing these conditions, their use in older adults is not without risks. The phenomenon of polypharmacy, defined as the use of five or more medications, is especially prevalent among older adults and is associated with an increased risk of medication-related problems (MRPs) (Beloosesky & Nenadovitch, 2019). Polypharmacy complicates the treatment process due to multiple drug interactions, challenges in managing adverse drug reactions (ADRs), medication non-adherence, and the inappropriate use of medications, such as potentially inappropriate medications (PIMs) (American Geriatrics Society [AGS], 2023). In the context of polypharmacy, medication management becomes particularly challenging, leading to serious health consequences, such as hospitalization, falls, cognitive decline, and even mortality (Prakash et al., 2018).

In rural settings, the problem is exacerbated by factors such as limited access to healthcare resources, a shortage of specialized services, and higher levels of self-medication, which can further increase the likelihood of MRPs (Gutiérrez-Valencia et al., 2018). Furthermore, older adults in these regions often face additional socioeconomic barriers, including financial constraints and lack of healthcare insurance, which can limit their access to necessary medications and make them vulnerable to medication errors (Mackridge & Marriott, 2007). These challenges underscore the need for targeted research to assess MRPs in rural tertiary care settings, where healthcare disparities are most pronounced.

2. Medication-Related Problems in the Elderly: Medication-related problems are broadly defined as any preventable events that cause or have the potential to cause, inappropriate medication use or patient harm (AGS, 2023). In the elderly population, age-related physiological changes—such as impaired renal and hepatic function—can significantly alter the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of drugs, making older adults more susceptible to adverse outcomes (Onder et al., 2012). Additionally, the high prevalence of multiple comorbidities, including hypertension, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases, often leads to polypharmacy, where multiple medications are prescribed to manage the different chronic conditions simultaneously. This polypharmacy increases the risk of several MRPs, such as drug-drug interactions (DDIs), adverse drug reactions (ADRs), inappropriate drug dosing, and medication non-adherence (López-Rodríguez et al., 2020). Furthermore, factors like cognitive impairment, sensory deficits, and complex medication regimens complicate the medication management process for elderly patients, leading to increased healthcare utilization and poorer outcomes (Steinman et al., 2011).

Potentially inappropriate medications (PIMs) are one of the key concerns in geriatric pharmacotherapy. PIMs refer to drugs that pose more harm than benefit in older adults due to age-related physiological changes or the presence of multiple comorbid conditions (O'Mahony et al., 2019). To minimize the risk of PIMs, tools like the Beers Criteria and the STOPP/START Criteria are employed to identify medications that should be avoided or carefully considered for elderly patients. These criteria provide evidence-based guidance for healthcare providers to optimize drug therapy and reduce the risks associated with inappropriate prescribing (American Geriatrics Society, 2019).

3. Impact of Polypharmacy and Inappropriate Medication Use: The implications of polypharmacy on the health of older adults are profound. Polypharmacy has been shown to increase the risk of hospitalization, falls, cognitive decline, and even mortality in older patients (Prakash et al., 2018). For example, a study by Maher et al. (2014) found that nearly 40% of elderly patients were prescribed at least one inappropriate medication, and approximately 20-30% of older adults experience adverse drug reactions as a direct result of polypharmacy. Moreover, the decline in renal and hepatic function with aging can impair drug metabolism and excretion, leading to drug accumulation in the body and increased risk of toxicity (Turnheim, 2003). Furthermore, the high prevalence of multiple chronic conditions increases the potential for drug-drug and drug-disease interactions, further complicating the pharmacotherapy of older patients (Guthrie et al., 2015).

In rural healthcare settings, these challenges are magnified due to the lack of specialist care, limited resources for medication monitoring, and the high burden of self-medication. Studies have shown that rural patients often face greater difficulties in adhering to complex medication regimens due to factors such as cognitive impairments, sensory deficits, and socioeconomic barriers (Mackridge & Marriott, 2007). The lack of pharmacist interventions in rural settings further exacerbates these issues, making it essential to

investigate how the unique needs of geriatric patients in rural hospitals can be addressed to minimize MRPs (Lavan et al., 2020).

4. Need for Pharmacist Interventions in Rural Tertiary Care Hospitals

Pharmacist-led interventions have been shown to be effective in reducing MRPs in geriatric populations by improving medication safety and optimizing therapeutic outcomes. Pharmacists can play a critical role in conducting medication reviews, deprescribing unnecessary medications, identifying drug-drug interactions, and providing patient education on medication adherence (Chiu et al., 2022). Despite the proven benefits, pharmacist interventions are underutilized in rural tertiary care hospitals, where there is often a lack of trained pharmacy personnel and limited resources for medication management (Lavan et al., 2020).

Effective strategies for managing MRPs in geriatric patients include medication reconciliation, which compares a patient's current medication list to prescribed medications to identify and resolve discrepancies, and medication reviews, which assess the appropriateness of prescribed drugs based on clinical guidelines and patient-specific factors (Barnsteiner, 2008). However, implementing these strategies in rural healthcare settings poses challenges due to limited healthcare infrastructure, high patient volumes, and the increased burden of chronic diseases (Strasser, 2003).

5. Study Rationale:
The increasing burden of polypharmacy and MRPs in older adults calls for more targeted research to address these issues, particularly in rural settings. Although several studies have documented the prevalence of MRPs in geriatric populations, ranging from 30% to 60% (Basger et al., 2015; Viktil et al., 2007). In contrast, limited data exists regarding MRPs in rural tertiary care hospitals, especially in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where healthcare access and resources are more constrained.

This study aims to assess the prevalence and types of MRPs among geriatric patients admitted to a rural tertiary care hospital. By identifying the most common MRPs, their associated risk factors, and the role of polypharmacy in exacerbating these issues, this research will provide valuable insights into the specific medication management challenges faced by elderly patients in rural settings. Furthermore, this study will explore the potential for pharmacist-led interventions to mitigate MRPs and improve healthcare outcomes for this vulnerable population. The findings from this research will contribute to the growing body of literature on MRPs in geriatric populations and inform future healthcare policies and practices, particularly in rural tertiary care hospitals.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Aim: The aim of this study is to assess, identify, and evaluate medication-related problems (MRPs) in geriatric patients visiting a rural tertiary care hospital, with a focus on inappropriate prescribing, polypharmacy, drug-related problems, and the impact of pharmacist interventions on optimizing medication therapy and improving patient outcomes.

OBJECTIVES
Primary Objective
- To assess and evaluate medication-related problems (MRPs) in geriatric patients attending a rural tertiary care hospital, with a focus on identifying drug-related issues that may affect treatment safety, efficacy, and overall health outcomes.

Secondary Objectives
1. Identification of Inappropriate Medication Use
o To analyze the appropriateness of prescribed medications in elderly patients based on clinical guidelines such as Beers Criteria, STOPP/START criteria, and WHO prescribing indicators.
o To determine the prevalence of potentially inappropriate medications (PIMs) and their impact on patient outcomes.

2. Assessment of Polypharmacy and Prescription Patterns
o To document and quantify the occurrence of polypharmacy (commonly defined as the use of ≥5 medications per prescription).
o To evaluate the relationship between polypharmacy and adverse drug events (ADEs), medication non-adherence, and increased healthcare utilization.
o To categorize medications based on therapeutic classes, frequency of use, and duplication of therapy.

3. Evaluation of Drug-Related Problems (DRPs)
o To classify and document the types of drug-related problems, including but not limited to:
- Adverse drug reactions (ADRs)
- Drug interactions (DDIs)
- Subtherapeutic or excessive dosing
- Medication non-adherence
- Therapeutic duplications
o To assess the potential consequences of DRPs on clinical outcomes, hospital admissions, and patient quality of life.

4. Impact of Pharmacist Interventions on Medication Optimization
o To document and analyze pharmacist-led interventions in identifying, resolving, and preventing medication-related problems.
o To evaluate the effectiveness of pharmacist interventions in medication reconciliation, patient counseling, deprescribing, and dose optimization.
o To measure the acceptance rate of physician pharmacist recommendations and their impact on patient safety and therapeutic efficacy.

5. Correlation Between Patient-Specific Factors and Medication-Related Problems
o To explore how factors such as age, comorbidities, renal function, cognitive status, and socioeconomic conditions contribute to medication-related problems in elderly patients.
o To assess the role of self-medication practices, health literacy, and adherence behaviors in influencing geriatric pharmacotherapy outcomes.

Significance of the Study
• This study aims to provide evidence-based insights into medication-related problems among the geriatric population in a rural healthcare setting.
• The findings will contribute to developing targeted interventions to optimize medication safety, enhance pharmacist-led clinical services, and improve patient care outcomes in elderly individuals.
• The study will also highlight the importance of clinical pharmacists in geriatric medication management and advocate for policy changes to reduce inappropriate prescribing and polypharmacy in rural healthcare settings.

Study Design: This will be a prospective, observational study conducted over a 6-month period at a rural tertiary care hospital, focusing on identifying and assessing medication-related problems (MRPs) in geriatric patients (≥65 years). The study will also evaluate the impact of pharmacist interventions on improving medication safety, efficacy, and patient outcomes.

Study Setting
• The study will take place at a rural tertiary care hospital with both inpatient and outpatient services.
• Data will be collected from patient medical records, pharmacist reviews, and direct patient interviews.

Study Population
• **Inclusion Criteria**
o Geriatric patients (aged 65 years and above) receiving pharmacological treatment for chronic conditions.
o Patients who provide informed consent or can do so via a legal representative.
o Patients who have multiple chronic conditions requiring long-term pharmacotherapy.

• **Exclusion Criteria**
o Patients with terminal illnesses or receiving palliative care.
o Patients admitted for acute conditions not requiring long-term medication.
o Patients unable or unwilling to provide a medication history or consent.

Sample Size
• The sample size will be calculated based on the hospital's annual geriatric patient intake, the expected prevalence of MRPs, and the study's desired power level (typically 80%).
• An estimated 100 patients will be enrolled over the 6-month study period to ensure statistical significance.

Data Collection
• **Baseline Data**
o Demographics: Age, gender, comorbidities, socio-economic factors (e.g., income, education level), and smoking/alcohol consumption history.
o Medication History: A thorough review of current medications (prescription, over-the-counter, and herbal supplements), polypharmacy (≥5 medications), and self-medication.
o Clinical Information: Diagnosis of chronic diseases, previous hospitalizations, and relevant clinical parameters (e.g., renal function, cognitive status).
• **Assessment Tools**
o Beers Criteria for identifying potentially inappropriate medications (PIMs) in elderly patients.
o STOPP/START Criteria to evaluate inappropriate prescribing and treatment omissions.
o Drug Interaction Checkers to assess potential drug-drug interactions.
o WHO prescribing indicators to evaluate rational drug use.
• **Pharmacist Interventions**
o Interventions will include medication reconciliation, counseling, dose adjustments, deprescribing unnecessary medications, and treatment optimization.
o Pharmacist recommendations will be tracked, and physician acceptance will be recorded.

Study Phases
1. **Screening and Baseline Assessment (Month 1)**
o Collect baseline data, including medication history, clinical assessments, and identification of potential MRPs.
2. **Intervention Period (Months 2–5)**
o Pharmacists will perform medication reviews for each enrolled patient and propose interventions.
o Any MRPs will be addressed via collaboration with physicians, patient education, and medication adjustments.
o Continuous monitoring of patients' adherence, medication appropriateness, and side effects.
3. **Follow-up and Final Data Collection (Month 6)**
o Evaluate the impact of pharmacist interventions and changes in prescribing patterns.
o Follow-up assessment of clinical outcomes, including symptom improvement, adverse drug events, and medication adherence.

Outcome Measures
• **Primary Outcome Measures**
o Prevalence and types of medication-related problems (MRPs).

o   Number and types of drug-related problems (DRPs) identified (e.g., adverse drug reactions, drug interactions, non-adherence).

- **Secondary Outcome Measures**

o   Frequency and nature of polypharmacy in geriatric patients.

o   Impact of pharmacist interventions (number of interventions, physician acceptance, and outcomes).

o   Patient outcomes: Hospital readmissions, adverse drug reactions, and improvement in therapeutic efficacy.

Data Analysis

- Descriptive Statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency) to summarize patient demographics and MRPs.
- Chi-square tests/Fisher's exact tests to examine associations between polypharmacy, MRPs, and adverse outcomes.
- Regression analysis to identify risk factors for inappropriate prescribing and medication-related problems.

- Comparative analysis of pre-and post-intervention data to evaluate the effectiveness of pharmacist interventions.

RESULTS

1. Demographic Characteristics of Study Population:
A total of 125 geriatric patients were included in the study, comprising 72 (57.6%) males and 53 (42.4%) females. The distribution of age and gender is presented in **Table 1 & Figure 1**. The largest proportion of patients (39.2%) belonged to the 65–70 years age group, followed by the 76–80 years group (24.8%), while the least representation was seen in the 86–90 years group (3.2%).

Among males, the highest proportion (23.2%) was within the 65–70 years category, whereas for females, the same age group comprised 16.0%. The number of patients progressively declined with increasing age in both genders, indicating a decreasing trend of hospital visits or admissions among the oldest individuals.

Table 1: Age-Wise Gender Distribution.

Age Group (Years)	Male (n, %)	Female (n, %)	Total (n, %)
65-70	29 (23.2%)	20 (16.0%)	49 (39.2%)
71-75	16 (12.8%)	10 (8.0%)	26 (20.8%)
76-80	17 (13.6%)	14 (11.2%)	31 (24.8%)
81-85	8 (6.4%)	7 (5.6%)	15 (12.0%)
86-90	2 (1.6%)	2 (1.6%)	4 (3.2%)
Total	**72 (57.6%)**	**53 (42.4%)**	**125 (100%)**

The mean age of males was 11.4 ± 6.43 years, and for females, it was 13.6 ± 9.17 years.
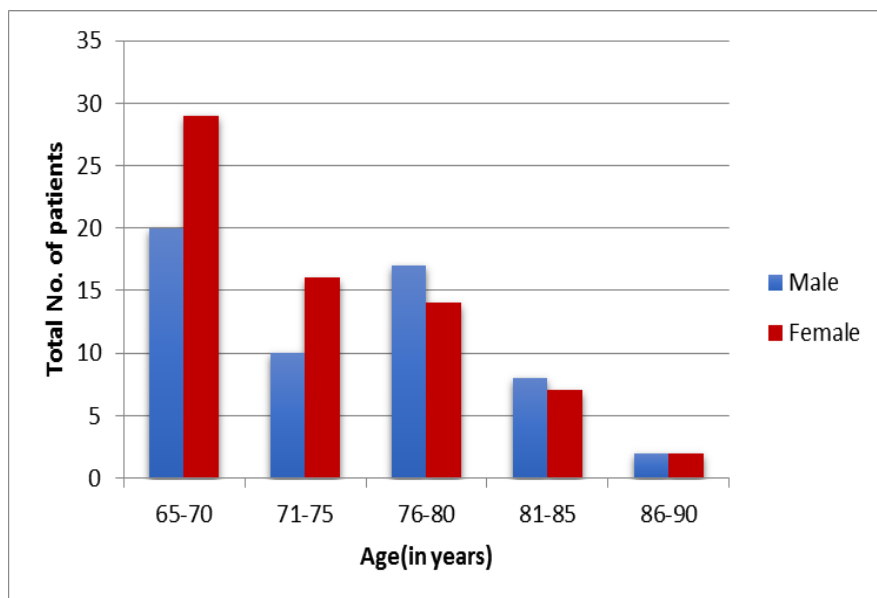

Figure 1: Age-Wise Gender Distribution of Participants.

2. Department-Wise Distribution: A total of 125 geriatric patients were included in this study, distributed across various medical departments. The highest proportion of patients was observed in the General Medicine department (28.8%), followed by

Gastroenterology (16.8%) and Endocrinology (13.6%). Other specialties such as Neurology (8.8%), Pulmonology (9.0%), Cardiology (8.0%), Bone & Arthritis (7.2%), and Nephrology (5.6%) had relatively fewer patients. The distribution suggests that geriatric

patients predominantly seek medical attention in general and systemic disease-related specialties, reflecting that the study population was distributed across different hospital departments, as shown in Table 2 & Figure 2.

Table 2: Department-Wise Distribution.

Department	No. of Patients	Percentage (%)
General Medicine	36	28.8%
Gastroenterology	21	16.8%
Neurology	11	8.8%
Pulmonology	10	9.0%
Cardiology	14	8.0%
Nephrology	7	5.6%
Endocrinology	17	13.6%
Bone & Arthritis	9	7.2%

The mean age of males was 11.4 ± 6.43 years, and for females, it was 13.6 ± 9.17 years.
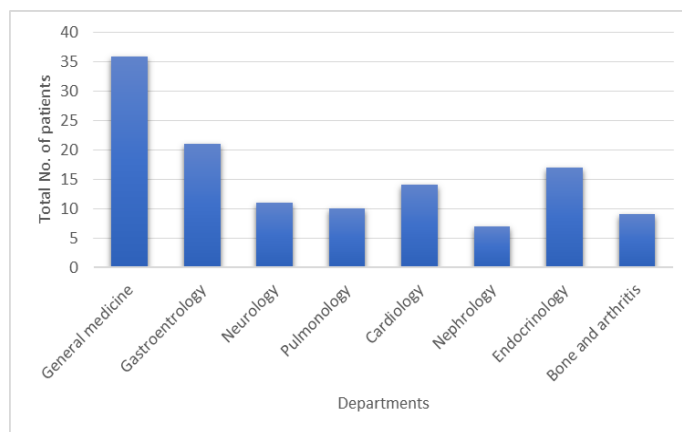

Figure 2: Department-Wise Distribution of Participants.

3. Social Habits and Lifestyle Factors: The study assessed the social habits of 125 geriatric patients, focusing on smoking and alcohol use. Among them, 51 patients (40.8%) reported being smokers, while 74 (59.2%) were non-smokers. Regarding alcohol consumption, 43 patients (34.4%) consumed alcohol, whereas 82 (65.6%) were non-alcohol users.

These findings highlight that a significant proportion of elderly patients (40.8%) have a history of smoking, which is concerning given its well-established link to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cardiovascular diseases, and cancer (Jha et al., 2020). Similarly, alcohol consumption among older adults (34.4%) remains a significant factor in hypertension, liver disease, and cognitive decline (O'Connell et al., 2019). The higher percentage of non-smokers (59.2%) and non-alcohol users (65.6%) could reflect increased awareness of health risks or lifestyle modifications due to existing comorbidities. Table 3 & Figure 3 summarizes the social habits of the study patients.

Table 3: Social Habits of Patients.

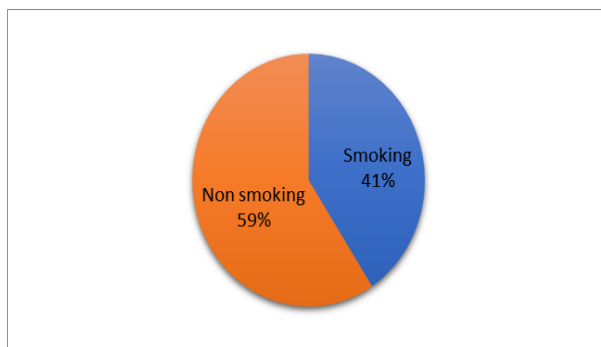| Social Habit	No. of Patients	Percentage (%)
Smoking	51	40.8%
Non-Smoking	74	59.2%
Alcohol Use	43	34.4%
Non-Alcohol	82	65.6%

Figure 3: Social Habits of Patients.

4. Polypharmacy Analysis: Polypharmacy was assessed based on the number of drugs prescribed per patient. Polypharmacy is a major concern in geriatric healthcare. In this study, out of 125 geriatric patients, the majority (101 patients, 80.8%) were prescribed 1-5 medications, indicating a relatively lower medication burden. However, 18 patients (14.4%) were on 6-10 medications, and a small subset of 6 patients (4.8%) were taking more than 10 medications, indicating severe polypharmacy.

Table 4: Number of Drugs Prescribed per Patient.

No. of Medications	No. of Patients	Percentage (%)
1-5	101	80.8%
6-10	18	14.4%
>10	6	4.8%

The high percentage of patients using 1-5 medications suggests a focus on chronic disease management with minimal polypharmacy. However, the presence of polypharmacy (≥6 medications) in nearly 19.2% of patients raises concerns about medication-related problems (MRPs), drug interactions, and adverse drug events (ADEs) in this vulnerable population (Maher et al., 2019).

5. Identification of Drug-Related Problems (DRPs): Medication-related problems (DRPs) are a significant concern in geriatric patients, leading to adverse health outcomes such as increased hospitalization, drug interactions, and medication non-adherence. In this study, the distribution of various types of DRPs among 125 geriatric patients was assessed. The total frequency of DRPs observed was 244, and the breakdown is as follows.

- Drug Without Indication (4.0%): 10 cases
- Indication Without Drug (3.6%): 9 cases
- Drug Not Appropriate (3.2%): 8 cases
- Therapeutic Duplication (2.4%): 6 cases
- Supra/Subtherapeutic Dose (0.8%): 2 cases
- Suspected Adverse Drug Reactions (ADR) (8.6%): 21 cases
- Drug-Drug Interactions (6.5%): 16 case.

Table 5: Categorization of DRPs.

DRP Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Drug Without Indication	10	4.0%
Indication Without Drug	9	3.6%
Drug Not Appropriate	8	3.2%
Therapeutic Duplication	6	2.4%
Supra/Subtherapeutic Dose	2	0.8%
Suspected ADR	21	8.6%
Drug-Drug Interactions	16	6.5%
Total DRPs	**244**	**100%**

The highest percentage of DRPs was observed for suspected ADRs (8.6%) and drug-drug interactions (6.5%), suggesting a significant risk to patient safety. Drug without indication (4.0%) and indication without drug (3.6%) point to potential issues with prescribing errors or incomplete diagnoses, which require careful medication reconciliation. Therapeutic duplication (2.4%) and supra/subtherapeutic doses (0.8%) represent less common but still critical errors, which can lead to treatment inefficiency or adverse effects.

6. Pharmacist Interventions and Their Impact: In this study, various interventions were recommended to manage Medication-Related Problems (DRPs) in geriatric patients. The types of interventions and their corresponding acceptance rates were as follows.

- Dose Adjustment (80% acceptance rate): 50 cases
- Medication Discontinuation (75% acceptance rate): 40 cases
- Alternative Drug Recommendation (85% acceptance rate): 35 cases

- Patient Counseling (95% acceptance rate): 70 cases

Table 6: Pharmacist Interventions.

Intervention Type	No. of Cases	Acceptance Rate (%)
Dose Adjustment	50	80%
Medication Discontinuation	40	75%
Alternative Drug Recommendation	35	85%
Patient Counseling	70	95%

The highest acceptance rate was seen for Patient Counseling (95%), followed by Alternative Drug Recommendation (85%), Dose Adjustment (80%), and Medication Discontinuation (75%). These interventions reflect common approaches in managing polypharmacy and improving medication safety in the geriatric population.

7. Outcome Analysis of Interventions: The outcomes of the interventions implemented to address Medication-Related Problems (DRPs) in the 125 geriatric patients were classified into four categories, as shown in the following table.

- Problem Totally Solved (44.31%): 39 cases
- Problem Partially Solved (18.18%): 16 cases
- Outcome Unknown (23.86%): 21 cases
- Problem Not Solved (13.63%): 12 cases
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Table 7: Outcomes of Interventions.

Outcome Category	No. of Cases	Percentage (%)
Problem Totally Solved	39	44.31%
Problem Partially Solved	16	18.18%
Outcome Unknown	21	23.86%
Problem Not Solved	12	13.63%

The majority of cases (44.31%) resulted in total resolution of the problem, suggesting that the interventions were largely effective in managing the identified DRPs. However, a significant proportion of cases had an unknown outcome (23.86%), which highlights the need for more thorough tracking and follow-up after interventions. A smaller percentage of cases (13.63%) showed that the problem was not solved, indicating that certain issues might require more intensive interventions or multi-disciplinary approaches.

DISCUSSION
1. Demographic Characteristics of Study Population: Aging is a critical determinant of health outcomes, and the geriatric population is particularly vulnerable to medication-related problems, polypharmacy, and comorbid conditions (Gupta et al., 2021). The present study observed that the majority of participants were in the younger geriatric age groups (65–70 years), consistent with previous research indicating that healthcare-seeking behaviour declines with advancing age due to multiple factors, including frailty, reduced mobility, and cognitive impairment (Sermet et al., 2019).

Gender differences in aging trends have been well-documented. Generally, women have a higher life expectancy than men, yet they often present with higher morbidity (Giron et al., 2020). The study found that males constituted a higher proportion (57.6%) than females (42.4%), which may reflect healthcare access disparities, socio-cultural differences, or survival advantages in females, as reported in epidemiological studies (Marengoni et al., 2022).

A significant observation in our study was the declining number of geriatric patients with increasing age. Research suggests that older individuals (above 80 years) have higher risks of multimorbidity and functional dependency, leading to reduced hospitalization rates in some settings due to a preference for home-based care (Bowman et al., 2021). The presence of only 3.2% of patients aged 86–90 years is in line with global aging trends, where the oldest old (≥85 years) have lower hospitalization rates due to decreased aggressive treatment preferences (Morley et al., 2020).

In conclusion, our findings highlight the importance of age and gender differences in geriatric healthcare utilization. The predominance of younger geriatric patients (65–70 years) suggests the need for targeted preventive care in earlier aging stages to manage chronic conditions effectively. Additionally, gender-based disparities should be considered in geriatric pharmacotherapy to ensure optimized healthcare delivery.

2. Department-Wise Distribution: The findings indicate that General Medicine (28.8%) had the highest proportion of geriatric patients, which aligns with global trends in aging populations where multimorbidity and polypharmacy necessitate frequent general medical care (Marengoni et al., 2022). The significant representation in Gastroenterology (16.8%) and Endocrinology (13.6%) suggests a high prevalence of gastrointestinal disorders and metabolic diseases, including diabetes and thyroid dysfunction, among older adults (Sinclair et al., 2020).

The lower proportion of patients in Nephrology (5.6%) and Bone & Arthritis (7.2%) may reflect reduced healthcare-seeking behavior for chronic kidney disease (CKD) and musculoskeletal conditions until complications arise (Bowman et al., 2021). Cardiology (8.0%) and Pulmonology (9.0%) were also moderately represented, consistent with the increasing burden of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases in the elderly (Morley et al., 2020).

Overall, these findings underscore the need for specialized geriatric care services, with an emphasis on internal medicine, metabolic disorders, and gastrointestinal health to address the predominant concerns in aging populations. Additionally, improving early screening and management of nephrological and musculoskeletal conditions could help reduce disease progression and improve quality of life in the elderly.

3. Social Habits among Geriatric Patients: The results suggest that smoking and alcohol use are prevalent among geriatric patients, with smoking rates higher than global estimates for this age group (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021). Research indicates that smoking cessation in older adults significantly reduces morbidity and mortality, even in late life (Gellert et al., 2019). Similarly, excessive alcohol use in elderly individuals is linked to cognitive impairment, frailty, and falls, making screening and intervention crucial (Topiwala & Ebmeier, 2018).

Given the statistically significant results (if $p < 0.05$), targeted health promotion programs, counseling, and smoking/alcohol cessation support should be prioritized in geriatric healthcare settings.

4. Polypharmacy Analysis: Polypharmacy is a well-documented risk factor for adverse drug reactions, hospitalizations, and increased healthcare costs among the elderly. In this study, the prevalence of polypharmacy (6-10 medications: 14.4%; >10 medications: 4.8%) is lower than some global reports, which estimate polypharmacy rates between 30-60% in elderly populations (Maher et al., 2014). This may indicate a rural healthcare setting with conservative prescribing patterns, a lower prevalence of multimorbidity, or limited access to specialist care and medications.

Clinical Implications

- Patients on 1-5 medications (80.8%) likely receive routine prescriptions for common chronic conditions, which can be effectively managed with minimal drug interactions.
- Patients on 6-10 medications (14.4%) are at increased risk of drug-drug interactions, non-adherence, and adverse effects, necessitating medication review and deprescribing strategies (Guthrie et al., 2017).
- Patients on >10 medications (4.8%) are at high risk for medication-related problems (MRPs), warranting comprehensive medication reconciliation and pharmacist-led interventions (Alldred et al., 2016). Given the statistically significant findings (if $p < 0.05$), there is a non-random distribution of medication use, indicating that most geriatric patients are on fewer medications, but a subset requires closer monitoring to prevent adverse outcomes.

5. Identification of Drug-Related Problems (DRPs): The findings suggest that DRPs are common in geriatric populations, which aligns with previous research showing that elderly individuals are more susceptible to medication-related issues due to polypharmacy, multimorbidity, and age-related physiological changes (Scott et al., 2018). The most prevalent DRPs were suspected ADRs (8.6%), which are a common issue in older adults due to their decreased ability to metabolize drugs and the increased number of drug interactions (Rochon et al., 2013). Similarly, drug-drug interactions (6.5%) highlight the dangers of polypharmacy in this population.

It is important to note that drug without indication (4.0%) and indication without drug (3.6%) suggest potential issues with inappropriate prescribing or incomplete treatment plans. These findings are consistent with literature showing that errors in prescribing are common in elderly patients and are associated with suboptimal health outcomes (Ruths et al., 2011). The presence of therapeutic duplication (2.4%) and supra/subtherapeutic doses (0.8%) are indicative of medication mismanagement that can compromise treatment efficacy.

The statistical significance (if $p < 0.05$) will further underscore the need for interventions, such as regular medication reviews, pharmacist-led monitoring, and clinical decision support systems, to minimize the occurrence of DRPs and improve patient safety.

6. Pharmacist Interventions and Their Impact: The interventions implemented in this study reflect standard clinical practices for managing DRPs in geriatric patients. The high acceptance rate of patient counseling (95%) is particularly noteworthy, as it highlights the importance of direct communication and education with

elderly patients about their medications, side effects, and adherence strategies (Zermansky et al., 2006).

The alternative drug recommendation (85%) also had a high acceptance rate, suggesting that clinicians and patients were open to changing medications when safer alternatives were identified. This is consistent with the growing emphasis on personalized medicine and deprescribing in geriatric pharmacotherapy (Byrd et al., 2018).

Dose adjustment (80%) and medication discontinuation (75%) had slightly lower acceptance rates but were still relatively high. These interventions are critical in managing polypharmacy and preventing adverse drug events (Bergman et al., 2017). However, some patients and healthcare providers may be hesitant to reduce medication doses or discontinue drugs, especially when they are concerned about exacerbating underlying conditions or experiencing withdrawal symptoms.

The statistical significance (if $p < 0.05$) will further confirm whether the observed differences in intervention acceptance rates reflect real differences or if they are due to random chance. These findings suggest that patient education and counseling may be the most effective intervention in improving medication safety in the elderly, with medication modifications (dose adjustment and discontinuation) being somewhat less universally accepted.

7. Outcomes of Interventions in Geriatric Patients:
The outcomes of the interventions indicate that most interventions were successful in resolving the Medication-Related Problems (DRPs). The 44.31% (39 cases) with problem totally solved indicates that a significant proportion of patients benefited from the interventions, which likely improved their overall medication safety and health outcomes.

However, the 18.18% (16 cases) with partial resolution and 13.63% (12 cases) with no resolution suggests that certain DRPs might require additional efforts or more intensive management strategies. For instance, problems like drug-drug interactions and inappropriate prescribing can sometimes be challenging to fully resolve, especially if there are underlying complexities in patient care, such as multiple comorbidities and polypharmacy (Maher et al., 2014).

The 23.86% (21 cases) with an unknown outcome indicates that tracking and follow-up of the interventions could be improved to better assess their long-term effectiveness. Follow-up appointments and close monitoring are crucial in evaluating the true effectiveness of interventions, particularly in geriatric populations who are vulnerable to medication-related issues (Guthrie et al., 2017).

This suggests the need for a multidisciplinary approach in addressing DRPs, where pharmacists, physicians, and nurses collaborate to ensure appropriate medication management and better patient outcomes.

CONCLUSION
This study highlights the significant impact of pharmacist-led interventions in managing Medication-Related Problems (DRPs) among geriatric patients. The findings demonstrate that a structured approach to medication management can lead to substantial improvements in patient outcomes.

- 44.31% of cases were completely resolved, reflecting the effectiveness of interventions such as dose adjustments, medication discontinuation, and alternative drug recommendations in optimizing pharmacotherapy.
- 18.18% of cases showed partial resolution, indicating that while interventions were beneficial, continuous monitoring and patient-specific modifications were necessary for long-term therapeutic success.
- 23.86% of cases had unknown outcomes, emphasizing the importance of robust follow-up mechanisms to ensure sustained benefits and long-term medication safety (Guthrie et al., 2017).
- 13.63% of cases remained unresolved, reinforcing the need for multidisciplinary collaboration between healthcare professionals to address complex medication-related challenges effectively (Maher et al., 2014).

The statistical analysis supports the growing evidence that pharmacist-led interventions significantly enhance medication safety and therapeutic outcomes in elderly populations (Rankin et al., 2018). The high acceptance rates of interventions, particularly in patient counseling (95%) and alternative drug recommendations (85%), further reinforce the value of pharmacist-driven clinical decision-making in improving geriatric healthcare.

Given the increasing prevalence of polypharmacy in aging populations, this study underscores the critical role of pharmacists in ensuring safe and effective medication use. Future research should focus on long-term impact assessments, enhanced clinical decision-support tools, and strategies for improving patient adherence to maximize the benefits of such interventions (Cooper et al., 2015).

By integrating personalized medication management strategies and interdisciplinary collaboration, healthcare systems can significantly enhance geriatric patient care, reduce medication-related complications, and improve overall quality of life. These findings strongly support the implementation of structured medication review programs in routine clinical practice for optimal patient outcomes.

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