

Quality standards for safe medication in nursing homes: Development through a multi-step approach including a Delphi consensus study

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Abstract

Objectives: The aim of the study was to develop quality standards reflecting minimal requirements for safe medication processes in nursing homes.

Design: In a first step, relevant key topics for safe medication processes were deduced from a systematic search for similar guidelines, prior work and discussions with experts. In a second step, the essential requirements for each key topic were specified and substantiated with a literature-based rationale. Subsequently, the requirements were evaluated with a piloted, two-round Delphi study.

Setting: Nursing homes in Switzerland.

Participants: Interprofessional panel of 25 experts from science and practice.

Primary and secondary outcome measures: Each requirement was rated for its relevance for a safer and resident-oriented medication on a 9-point Likert-Scale based on the RAND/UCLA-Method. The requirements were considered relevant if, in the second round, the median relevance rating was ≥ 7 and the proportion of ratings ≥ 7 was $\geq 80\%$.

Results: Five key topics with a total of 87 requirements were elaborated and rated in the Delphi study. After the second round (response rate in both rounds 100%), 85 requirements fulfilled the predefined criteria and were therefore included in the final set of quality standards. The five key topics are: I: "The medication is reviewed regularly and in defined situations", II: "The medication is reviewed in a structured manner", III: "The medication is monitored in a structured manner", IV: "All health care professionals are committed to an optimal interprofessional collaboration", V: "Residents are actively involved in medication process".

Conclusions: We developed normative quality standards for a safer and resident-oriented medication in Swiss nursing homes. Altogether, 85 requirements define the medication processes and the behaviour of health care professionals. A rigorous implementation may support nursing homes in taking a step towards safer and resident-oriented medication.

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