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The Research Institute
for the Care of Older People

Sensory Impairment and the Pharmaceutical Care of Older People: The SIPA2 Study

Newsletter - December 2021, #1

SIPA2 is a 2-year study funded by the Dunhill Medical Trust to investigate the challenges that older people with visual and/or hearing impairment (hereafter referred to as sensory impairment) experience with their medicines.

Many older people use multiple medicines and the more medicines a person uses, the greater the likelihood of them having a medicine-related problem. In addition, many older people develop visual and/or hearing impairment and this can cause medicine-related problems e.g. missed doses, unintentional overdose.

The SIPA2 Study commenced in January 2021. Since then, we have undertaken several research activities.

Review of Assistive Technology/Products

We have completed a market review and identified 54 products e.g. medicine boxes, administration devices, that are available that could be used to help people with sensory impairment to use their medicines in a safe and effective manner. The results will be used to create a freely available, online resource that could help older people, family members and health and social care professionals to identify and recommend suitable products for medicine-related problems.

A day in the life of

We are working with older people across Scotland with hearing and/or visual impairment, to gather information about their daily experiences and challenges with their medicines, and the strategies that they employ to manage them.

Up to 15 people will be involved in this part of the project. Each person will use a variety of methods to collect information about their daily medicine journey, including making videos with their phones, or taking photographs, and/or writing notes/diaries, to document the way they order, obtain, store, administer and dispose of their medicines.

All this information will be combined to create visual representations of people's medicine journeys and will be used again later in the study.

Can you help?

We need a few more participants for this part of the study from the South or East Scotland, so if you are 65 or over, live at home, have hearing and/or visual impairment and use prescription medicines, and you are interested, please contact us for more information on the email address or telephone number on the bottom of the page.

Next Steps

In 2022, we will conduct UK-wide surveys of community pharmacists and occupational therapists to find out about their training needs to support older people who have sensory impairment and who use medicines. We will also work with a range of individuals and organisations to develop suggestions to support older people and their use of medicines.

By the end of 2022, we will also have created an online educational resource for health and social care professionals to increase their awareness of the medicine-related needs of older people with sensory impairment.

SIPA2 Team Members

The SIPA2 Study is led by Professor Margaret (Mags) Watson (Principal Investigator), with colleagues from different universities. The Project Advisory Group is chaired by Ms Irene Oldfather, Alliance Scotland and meets twice yearly to guide and advise the Study team.

For more information about SIPA2, please contact us on:

sipbs-sipa2project@strath.ac.uk or call
on 07842 626 424.