

P.E.A.R.L.S. Practical Evidence About Real Life Situations



Anticholinergics are effective for overactive bladder syndrome in adults

Clinical Question	Should I use anticholinergics to treat overactive bladder syndrome with medication in adults
Bottom Line	The use of anticholinergic drugs by people (men and women) with overactive bladder syndrome results in statistically significant improvements in symptoms, and a modest improvement in quality of life. On average people taking anticholinergic medications had about 5 less trips to the toilet and 4 less leakage episodes every week. (NNT 4 to 8). Caution is needed with the frail elderly.
Context	About 16% of adults have symptoms of overactive bladder syndrome (urgency with frequency and/or urge incontinence).
Caveat	About 1 in 3 people taking the drugs reported a dry mouth but for most this was not sufficiently troublesome for them to stop treatment. NNH 1 to 10. It is not clear whether any benefits are sustained during long-term treatment or after treatment stops.
Reference	Nabi G et al. Anticholinergic drugs versus placebo for overactive bladder syndrome in adults Cochrane Reviews, 2006, Issue 4. This review contains 61 trials with 11,956 participants.
Date written (author)	Jan 2007 (BMcAvoy)

NNT = numbers needed to treat to benefit one person

NNH = numbers needed to harm one person

Both NNT and NNH are only reported if the studies or pooling of studies is statistically significant

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