

Title: Qualitative study of barriers and enablers for benzodiazepine receptor agonists deprescribing in Belgian nursing homes to inform deprescribing intervention

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Background: Despite calls to reduce benzodiazepine receptor agonists (BZRA) use in older adults, prevalence of use in Belgian nursing homes (NHs) stays above 50%.

Objectives: To assess the barriers and enablers for BZRA deprescribing in Belgian NHs perceived by the different stakeholders.

Methods: In a purposive sample of 6 NHs, we conducted face-to-face interviews with 12 general practitioners (GPs), 5 focus groups (FGs) with 33 other healthcare providers (HCPs) (including pharmacists, nurses, physical and occupational therapists...) and 5 FGs with 21 residents and 5 relatives. The Theoretical Domains Framework (TDF) was used as a guide for interviews with HCPs and as deductive framework in analysis. FGs with residents and relatives were analyzed inductively. Two independent coders performed all analyses.

Results: Nine TDF domains were found to be relevant for HCPs, and 5 main themes were identified for residents and relatives. Stakeholders unanimously found that BZRA deprescribing is challenging and influenced by environmental factors. Additionally, HCPs perceived barriers that fell into the TDF domains of Goals, Memory, attention and decision process, Social influences, Skills and Social/professional role and identity. A lack of knowledge on BZRA, as well as perceived adverse consequences of deprescribing, were noted among all stakeholders except GPs. Finally, residents and relatives highlighted communication difficulties and attachment to their medicines.

Conclusion: BZRA deprescribing is subject to several behavioral determinants that partly differ between stakeholders. Identifying these is a first step towards developing an intervention that will be tested in a controlled trial.