



'Normal for over-65s to be on five medications'

HEALTH

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IT'S now normal for Irish people over the age of 65 to be taking five different prescribed medications, it has emerged.

A study from the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (RCSI) has found that people are taking more prescribed medications than they were 18 years ago.

However, the research also revealed that despite this increase, the quality of prescribing medications in Ireland has improved, with a marked 60pc decreased risk associated with prescribing drugs in older people.

ESCALATION

The lead author of the study, Frank Moriarty, said we have seen an escalation in the number of people, particularly those in middle and older age, taking multiple regular medicines in recent years.

"The more medicines a person is prescribed, the higher the chance of drug interactions, side effects or adverse events," he said.

"So with more people taking complex combinations of drugs than ever before, it's reassuring that the risk of potentially inappropriate prescribing has reduced when this is accounted for," Mr Moriarty said.

The number of people being prescribed five or more medications has increased four-fold, according to the research, which charted how prescribing has changed for medical card patients over a 15-year period.

It was developed by the RCSI in conjunction with the Health Research Board (HRB) Centre for Primary Care Research and Trinity College Dublin (TCD), and published in the BMJ Open.