

CADTH Reference List

Medication Administration by Health Care Aides in Long-Term Care Facilities

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Key Messages

- No evidence was identified regarding the comparative clinical effectiveness of medication administration by health care aides versus nurses for adults residing in long-term care.
- No evidence was identified regarding the cost-effectiveness of medication administration by health care aides versus nurses for adults residing in long-term care.
- No evidence-based guidelines were identified regarding medication administration by health care aides in long-term care settings.

Research Questions

1. What is the comparative clinical effectiveness of medication administration by health care aides versus nurses for adults residing in long-term care?
2. What is the cost-effectiveness of medication administration by health care aides versus nurses for adults residing in long-term care?
3. What are the evidence-based guidelines regarding medication administration by health care aides in long-term care settings?

Methods

Literature Search Methods

A limited literature search was conducted by an information specialist on key resources including MEDLINE, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, the international HTA database, the websites of Canadian and major international health technology agencies, as well as a focused internet search. The search strategy comprised both controlled vocabulary, such as the National Library of Medicine's MeSH (Medical Subject Headings), and keywords. The main search concepts were health care aides and medication administration, or medication administration and long-term care. CADTH-developed search filters were applied to limit retrieval to guidelines for the medication administration and long-term care search. The search was limited to English-language documents published between January 1, 2017 and March 21, 2022. Internet links were provided, where available.

Selection Criteria

One reviewer screened literature search results (titles and abstracts) and selected publications according to the inclusion criteria presented in Table 1. Full texts of study publications were not reviewed. Open access full-text versions of evidence-based guidelines were reviewed when available.

Table 1: Selection Criteria

Criteria	Description
Population	Adults residing in long-term care settings
Intervention	Medications administered by health care aides (also known as resident care attendants, resident support aides, long-term care aides, personal support workers, or unregulated health care staff)
Comparator	Medications administered by nurses (e.g., licensed practical nurses, registered practical nurses, registered psychiatric nurses, registered nurses)
Outcomes	Q1: Benefits (e.g., quality of life, patient satisfaction) and safety (e.g., medication errors, adverse events) Q2: Cost-effectiveness (e.g., cost per quality-adjusted life-year gained, incremental cost-effectiveness ratios) Q3: Recommendations regarding the appropriate administration of medications by health care aides
Study designs	Health technology assessments, systematic reviews, randomized controlled trials, non-randomized studies, economic evaluations, evidence-based guidelines

Results

No relevant health technology assessments, systematic reviews, randomized controlled trials, or non-randomized studies were identified regarding the comparative clinical effectiveness of medication administration by health care aides versus nurses for adults residing in long-term care. No economic evaluations were identified regarding the cost-effectiveness of medication administration by health care aides versus nurses for adults residing in long-term care. No evidence-based guidelines were identified regarding medication administration by health care aides in long-term care settings.

References of potential interest that did not meet the inclusion criteria are provided in Appendix 1.

References

Health Technology Assessments

No literature identified.

Systematic Reviews

No literature identified.

Randomized Controlled Trials

No literature identified.

Non-Randomized Studies

No literature identified.

Economic Evaluations

No literature identified.

Guidelines and Recommendations

No literature identified.

Appendix 1: References of Potential Interest

Non-Randomized Studies

No Comparator, Alternative Population – Individuals Residing in the Community

1. Dutton J, McCaskill K, Alton S, Levesley M, Hemingway C, Farndon L. Changing roles in community health care: delegation of insulin injections to health care support workers. *Br J Community Nurs*. 2018;23(1):14-19. [PubMed](#)

Additional References

2. Spilsbury K, Baker J, Alldred DP. Guidance on administration of medicines by care assistants in nursing homes. *Nurs Times*. 2017;113(2):26-28. <https://www.nursingtimes.net/roles/care-home-nurses/guidance-on-medicines-administration-by-care-assistants-in-nursing-homes-23-01-2017/>. Accessed 2022 Mar 24.