

**Taking Charge: Good Medical Care for the Elderly
and How to Get It**

**By: Jeanne M. Hannah
and Joseph H. Friedman, MD**

APPENDIX E

**Old Mission Press
P.O. Box 9
Old Mission, Michigan 49673
231-223-7864 (tel)
231-223-7868 (fax)
jeannemhannah@charter.net**

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Appendix E

Physiological Causes for Behavior Problems

Sometimes an elderly patient's problem behavior is caused by non-psychiatric reasons. To avoid the unnecessary use of an antipsychotic or other psychotropic medication that has deleterious effects on the elderly, use the following checklist to determine if there is any cause for the resident's behavior other than psychosis or another psychiatric disorder. Keep a copy of this checklist in your three-ring binder.

Physical Conditions

- Pain
- Fracture
- Recent injury due to fall or trauma (major/minor)
- Chronic disease (arthritis, peptic ulcer disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)

Bowel/Bladder

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toileting | <input type="checkbox"/> Catheter discomfort/pain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drying | <input type="checkbox"/> Abdominal distention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Impaction | <input type="checkbox"/> Bladder enlargement |

Disease States

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes (low glucose, high glucose) | <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease/asthma |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thyroid abnormalities | <input type="checkbox"/> Congestive heart failure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urinary tract infection | <input type="checkbox"/> Peptic ulcer disease |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory tract infection | |

Prescription Medications

- Antipsychotics/anticholinergic agents (Examples: Risperdal, over-the-counter allergy medications)
- Antianxiety medications (Examples: Valium, Ativan)
- Cardiovascular agents (heart medications example: Digoxin)
- Antidepressants
- Digitalis glycosides (heart medication)
- Xanthines (caffeine)
- Narcotic and non-narcotic analgesics
- H2 blockers (heart medication)
- Recent change in medications

Appendices

Over-the-Counter Medications

- Anticholinergic agents
- Antihistamines

Environmental Factors

- Change in environment/strange environment
- Change in roommate
- Death/absence of a spouse
- Stress
- Too much noise/light

Nutrition

- Hunger
- Thirst

Eyes, Ears

- Decreased vision
- Decreased hearing

Metabolic States

- Abnormal electrolytes (sodium, potassium)
- Blood gases (CO₂)

Neurological Deficits

- Stroke
- TIA (mini-stroke)
- Seizure activity
- Tumor
- Trauma

Depression

- Agitation
- Irritability
- Isolation (wish to be left alone)
- Insomnia
- Rule out causes such as caffeine intake, poor sleep habits

Positioning

- Cramped
- Uncomfortable
- Restraints