

## Medication Appropriateness Index

### Checklist to aid prescribing in an elderly patient

- Is there a need for pharmacotherapy in this patient?
- Is this the optimal medicine for the specific clinical diagnosis in this patient?
- Will the medicine introduce unnecessary duplication with existing medicines in this patient?
- Is the dosage correct?
- Is the formulation suitable?
- Is the duration of therapy acceptable?
- Is the medicine likely to interact with existing medication?
- Is the medicine likely to affect, or be affected by, concurrent disease?
- Are the directions for use correct and feasible for this patient?

### Rules for safe and effective prescribing in older patients

- Prescribe cautiously: your patient's symptoms may be amenable to non-pharmacological therapy
- Prescribe appropriately: use a checklist (see above) to make sure that the chosen medicine is appropriate for the individual patient under your care
- Start low, go slow: age-related changes may have affected your patient's ability to handle the medicine
- Review regularly: newly prescribed medicines may not be working; longterm medicines may no longer be safe or effective
- Limit the range of medicines you use in the older patient: this enables you to develop expertise in their usage
- Remember the risky medicines: e.g. diuretics, digoxin, anti-thrombotics, NSAIDs, CNS medicines, thyroxine