

MEDIA RELEASE

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PAGB response to study suggesting link between anticholinergic medication and cognitive impairment and dementia

New research, published online by JAMA Neurology, has suggested that anticholinergic medication use may be linked to cognitive impairment and an increased risk of dementia in older adults.

John Smith, PAGB Chief Executive, comments: “It is important to note that the JAMA study only involved people with a mean age of 73 in what the researchers conceded was a small sample. The study followed people who took medicines that were low, medium or high in anticholinergic activity, and concluded that the use of medication with medium or high anticholinergic activity should be discouraged in older adults if alternative therapies are available. However, due to the study limitations, the researchers propose that further and more advanced studies are needed.

“Anticholinergic medicines include some over-the-counter allergy and cold and flu products but these are intended for short term relief of symptoms and not for continuous use as in the research.

“If anyone has any concerns about their medicine, we would advise them to talk to their pharmacist. There is a range of different allergy, cold and flu products on the market which contain different ingredients, many of which were not considered in this study, and a pharmacist will be able to recommend a suitable product.

“All over-the-counter medicines in the UK have been approved by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and are rigorously assessed for safety and efficacy. Once on the market, their safety is continually monitored in light of any emerging evidence.”

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Notes to editors:

PAGB (Proprietary Association of Great Britain) is the UK trade association representing manufacturers of branded over-the-counter medicines, self care medical devices and food supplements.

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