

# More Meds is Not More Health

It's no secret that medication can be tricky. In some cases, it can be useful for managing our health and helps keep us alive! However, medicine is not without side effects or risks, and the more medication that we take, the higher our associated risks are. With heavier forms of medication, we run the risk of addiction or medication abuse. With lower types of medication, we still run the risks of side effects.

Studies conducted by researchers have explored the impact of taking many medications in adults. A survey of 56 older adults who did not need nursing care assistance was conducted. The number of drugs, types of medications, chronic diseases, and lifestyle were assessed as well as an analysis of heart rate variability (HRV) to test the overall function and health of the nervous system. Results showed that as the number of medications increased (the study cutoff at six drugs maximum), the more abnormal and low the participant's HRV was.

These results show that heavy amounts of medication, of any kind, can impact the body's ability to function on its' own. When our HRV is lower, we know that at our core, our nervous system isn't functioning optimally. Symptoms of dysfunction can then occur, and we can find ourselves reaching for even more medication to help "correct" the new symptom. Rather than reach for even more medication, it's vital to our health and overall well-being that we ensure our body can function the way it is designed. Medicine can't replace the internal functions of the human body, and while it may be necessary in some cases, we should first ensure that we get the body (and nervous system) functioning the best that it can before we reach for it!

Okada M, Okada K, Fujii K (2018) Influence of polypharmacy on heart rate variability in older adults at the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Survivors Recuperation Research Center, Japan. PLoS ONE 13(12): e0209081. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0209081>



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