THE CRITERIA FOR ESCAPE
AN ONLINE EDUCATIONAL ESCAPE ROOM
ACTIVITY ENCOURAGING APPLICATION OF THE
AGS 2019 BEERS CRITERIA® TO PATIENT CASES

REBECCA BRYNJULSON, PHARMD, BCACP, BCGP
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE
DIRECTOR OF INTRODUCTORY PHARMACY PRACTICE EXPERIENCES
NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

OBJECTIVES

• Identify the primary purpose of the AGS Beers Criteria®
• Identify key principles guiding use of the AGS Beers Criteria®
• Apply the AGS Beers Criteria® to patient cases
AMERICAN GERIATRICS SOCIETY 2019 UPDATED AGS BEERS CRITERIA® FOR POTENTIALLY INAPPROPRIATE MEDICATION USE IN OLDER ADULTS

J AM GERIATR SOC 67: 674-694, 2019 DOI: 10.1111/JGS.15767

CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE FAQs

• Who publishes these guidelines?
  • The American Geriatrics Society (AGS)

• What patient populations do these guidelines apply to?
  • Adults ≥ 65 years
  • All practice settings except hospice and palliative care
CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE FAQS

• What type of information is included?
  • There are five primary tables that contain information of interest in this patient population:
    • 2019 AGS Beers Criteria® for Potentially Inappropriate Medication Use in Older Adults
    • 2019 AGS Beers Criteria® for Potentially Inappropriate Medication Use in Older Adults Due to Drug-Disease or Drug-Syndrome Interactions that May Exacerbate the Disease or Syndrome
    • 2019 AGS Beers Criteria® for Potentially Inappropriate Medications: Drugs To Be Used With Caution in Older Adults
    • 2019 AGS Beers Criteria® for Potentially Clinically Important Drug-Drug Interactions That Should be Avoided in Older Adults
    • 2019 AGS Beers Criteria® for Medications that Should be Avoided or Have Their Dosage Reduced with Varying Levels of Kidney Function in Older Adults.

HOW TO USE THE 2019 AGS BEERS CRITERIA®

A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS, CLINICIANS, HEALTH SYSTEMS, AND PAYORS

A CLINICIAN EDUCATION TOOL
What is the Purpose of the AGS Beers Criteria®?

- To identify potentially inappropriate medications that should be avoided in many older adults
- To reduce adverse drug events and drug related problems, and to improve medication selection and medication use in older adults
- Designed for use in any clinical setting; also used as an educational, quality, and research tool

Optimizing Use of the AGS Beers Criteria®: A Guide

- As part of the update of the AGS Beers Criteria®, AGS created a workgroup to encourage optimal use of the criteria by patients, clinicians, health systems, and payors
  - Included input from key stakeholders
- Workgroup developed:
  - 7 key principles to guide optimal use of the criteria
  - Guidance for how clinicians and others can apply these principles in everyday practice
There are 7 key principles to guide optimal use of the AGS Beers Criteria®

But, the most important take-home message is this:

*Use clinical common sense!*

The AGS Beers Criteria® are intended to support, not contradict, common sense and good clinical care
Key Principle #1

**Medications in the 2019 AGS Beers Criteria® are potentially inappropriate, not definitely inappropriate.**

- The AGS Beers Criteria® comprise meds which have unfavorable balance of benefits and harms for many older adults
  - Particularly in light of available alternatives
- But, there are some older adults in which use of AGS Beers Criteria® meds can be appropriate
- So, meds in the criteria merit special scrutiny….but they should not be considered definitely inappropriate for all older adults

Key Principle #2

**Read the rationale and recommendations statements for each criterion. The caveats and guidance listed there are important.**

- Medication appropriateness is not black or white
- Many medications are considered potentially inappropriate only in certain circumstances
- Understanding true meaning and purpose of each criterion is critical for proper interpretation
Key Principle #3

Understand why medications are included in the 2019 AGS Beers Criteria®, and adjust your approach to those medications accordingly.

- It is not enough to know that a medication is included in the criteria. Clinicians should know why it is there.
  - This info is provided in the “rationale” statement of each criterion.
- Reason why a medication is in criteria can help guide how stringent we should be in avoiding it.
- Also, allows us to individualize decision-making for individuals based on their anticipated risk.

Key Principle #4

Optimal application of the 2019 AGS Beers Criteria® involves ... offering safer non-pharmacologic and pharmacologic therapies.

- AGS has developed a list of alternative therapies for some commonly-used AGS Beers Criteria medications (Coming Soon).
- Often the best alternatives involve non-pharmacologic strategies, including patient counseling and lifestyle changes.
Key Principle #5

The 2019 AGS Beers Criteria® should be a starting point for a comprehensive process of identifying and improving medication appropriateness and safety.

- The AGS Beers Criteria® capture only a small percentage of medication-related problems in older adults.
- The criteria work best when used as a starting point to review and discuss a patient’s entire medication regimen.
  - This involves addressing a range of issues including (but not limited to) medication appropriateness, adherence, and adverse events.

Key Principle #6

Access to medications included in the 2019 AGS Beers Criteria® should not be excessively restricted by prior authorization and/or health plan coverage policies.

- Incentivizing judicious use of AGS Beers Criteria® medications through insurance design can be reasonable.
- But, onerous restrictions can disrupt care and hinder access to medications for patients who need them.
- Programs that restrict access should be carefully targeted and give clinicians efficient opportunities to justify use.
Key Principle #7

The 2019 AGS Beers Criteria® are not equally applicable to all countries.

- The criteria were created principally based on medications available in the United States.
- Prior versions of the criteria have been adapted for several countries.
- It is reasonable to use broad-based categories of the criteria to identify potentially inappropriate medications.

Application of Key Principles

For...
- Patients and caregivers
- Clinicians
- Health systems and payors
Think of the AGS Beers Criteria® as a warning light

Whenever you think about prescribing or renewing an AGS Beers Criteria® medication, the “warning light” should make you stop and think:
- Why is the patient taking the drug; is it truly needed?
- Are there safer and/or more effective alternatives?
- Does my patient have particular characteristics that increase or mitigate risk of this medication?
- But, keep in mind that there are situations in which use of Beers medications is justified and appropriate

Actively inquire about symptoms that could be adverse drug effects, and assess whether these could be related to medications

Don’t automatically defer to colleagues
- Just because another clinician prescribed a Beers criteria medication doesn’t mean it is safe and/or effective
- Use the opportunity to discuss with colleagues whether that medication is right for the patient
Application of Key Principles for Clinicians

- Don’t let the AGS Beers® Criteria distract you from closely attending to other elements of prescribing that are not addressed by the criteria.

- These include
  - Other high-risk medications (e.g. anticoagulants, hypoglycemics)
  - Medication adherence
  - Unnecessary medication use
  - Underuse of medications
  - And more (!)

AGS Beers Criteria® Resources

- **Criteria**
  - Updated 2019 AGS Beers Criteria®
  - Using Wisely Editorial (2019)
  - Alternative Medications List
  - 2019 AGS Beers Criteria® Pocket Card
  - 2019 AGS Beers Criteria® in iGeriatrics App

- **Available at:** GeriatricsCareOnline.org

- **Public Education Resources for Patients & Caregivers**
  - AGS Beers Criteria® Summary
  - 10 Medications Older Adults Should Avoid
  - Avoiding Overmedication and Harmful Drug Reactions
  - What to Do and What to Ask Your Healthcare Provider if a Medication You Take is Listed in the AGS Beers Criteria®
  - My Medication Diary - Printable Download
Objectives

- Identify the primary purpose of the AGS Beers Criteria®
- Identify key principles guiding use of the AGS Beers Criteria®
- Apply the AGS Beers Criteria® to patient cases in an educational escape room activity with your peers.
THE ESCAPE ROOM ACTIVITY LINK

THE ESCAPE ROOM ACTIVITY DEBRIEF
REFERENCES
