

Principles of conservative prescribing.

March 23, 2012

Schiff G, Galanter W, Duhig J, et al. Principles of conservative prescribing. Arch Intern Med. 2011;171(16):1433-1440. doi:10.1001/archinternmed.2011.256.

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/principles-conservative-prescribing>

Strategies to prevent [medication errors](#) are an ongoing focus in patient safety. [Computerized provider order entry](#), [medication reconciliation](#), avoidance of drug–drug [interactions](#), and [bar-coded medication administration](#) are a few areas generating significant attention. This review discusses an alternate approach to medication safety, focusing on prevention of prescribing unnecessary medications at the outset. The authors provide a set of principles that urge clinicians to: think beyond drugs, practice more strategic prescribing, maintain heightened awareness about side effects, exercise skepticism about new drugs, work with patients for a shared agenda, and consider long-term impacts of medications prescribed. Each of these principles is discussed and sets the background for a recommendation to shift current paradigms in prescribing from "newer and more is better" to "fewer and more time tested is best."