

LAXATIVE USE IS ASSOCIATED WITH CHRONIC DIARRHOEA IN OLDER ADULTS LIVING IN CARE: A CROSS-SECTIONAL OBSERVATIONAL STUDY

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UEG Week Copenhagen 2023

Poster

Colorectal

October 15, 2023

A two-part New Zealand study found chronic diarrhoea affected 26% of older adults in residential care facilities, with two-thirds of cases associated with laxative use and negative impacts on quality of life, mood, and pressure injury risk.

KEY POINTS

- Among 2411 residents in 32 care facilities, 26% experienced chronic diarrhoea defined by Rome IV criteria, with 66% of these residents taking laxatives and 37% taking two or more types.
- Polypharmacy was significantly more common in residents with diarrhoea compared to those without (84% versus 48%, $p < 0.001$), and the most common laxative was Docusate sodium.
- Residents with diarrhoea had significantly higher rates of lower mood (18% versus 12%), greater pressure injury risk (13% versus 4%), and were less likely to enjoy time with friends and family (38% versus 20%).
- Self-reported data from 110 residents showed similar chronic diarrhoea prevalence at 21%, with authors concluding laxative use may be inappropriate in most cases.
- The study is relevant for clinicians managing bowel care in aged residential care populations and those reviewing medication appropriateness in older adults.

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