

3-17 Weight and cognitive enhancer

TIPS Question:

Have there been any studies or documentation to suggest Aricept causes decreased appetite or weight loss? We have noticed that a resident in our facility who had Aricept discontinued because it was no longer effective had a vast improvement in appetite and gained weight. This resident was not eating well until Aricept was discontinued.

What are the significant factors you have learned as a result of working through the six-question template?

- Always check for drugs, delirium, disease, discomfort
- Residents with dementia are more vulnerable to the effects of physical, emotional, environmental changes
- Know the resident, know the whole picture
- Involve the care workers from all departments who can bring their specialty and expertise together

Response:

Nausea, anorexia and weight loss are potential side effects to Aricept and other cholinesterase inhibitors. Therefore it is not surprising to gain weight after the drug is discontinued. However one should have detected those side effects earlier so that a switch to another agent could have been considered.

Please note: TIPS information should be used similar to the way you would use information from a text book! TIPS is not intended to serve as an individual consultation service! P.I.E.C.E.S. participants should use this information in context and always work closely with the family physician involved in the care of the resident or client and with other Partners In Care to find solutions to individual resident/client issues.