

# QUESTION: How do physicians prioritize different ethical considerations when attempting to deprescribe medications for older adults with cognitive impairment?

## Study Population and Process



689 primary care physicians in the US completed surveys

Asked to rank 9 barriers from “greatest” to “smallest” to deprescribing a medication for older adults with dementia in 2 clinical scenarios

### 2 clinical scenarios:



If continued, the medication could cause adverse drug event



No evidence the medication is beneficial

## Study Findings

Physicians were most concerned about deprescribing when:



the patient or family report symptomatic benefit from the medication



the medication was prescribed by another physician

Physicians were less concerned about:



the financial impact of continuing/discontinuing a medication

**CONCLUSION:** Understanding ethical aspects of physician decision-making can inform clinician education about medication management and deprescribing decisions for older adults with moderate dementia.

## Physician Talking Points

Many physicians wonder about how to address deprescribing opportunities with people living with dementia.



**Have you talked to your patients about the symptoms they are most concerned about?**



**Phrase to try:** "We will review how you are feeling and your medications to determine if all of them are still needed."



**Have you talked to your colleagues about stopping a medication they prescribed?**



**Phrase to try:** "Let's consider the patient's primary goals for this year and how we could adjust their medications to support those goals."



**Have you asked your patients if money is an issue when it comes to their medication?**



**Phrase to try:** "I would like to talk to you about the cost of your medication(s). Would that be okay with you?"