what you need to know about prescribing cascades

What is a prescribing cascade?

When the side effect of a drug is mistaken for a new medical condition, resulting in the prescription of another medication.

High blood pressure (BP) → Medication A to treat high BP → Side effect: ankle swelling → Medication B to treat swelling → and so on!

This leads to...

- increased risk for adverse drug reactions
- greater pill burden
- increased hospitalization risk

Older adults, particularly women, are at the greatest risk for drug-related harm.

What you can do

For more information, see: womensagelab.ca

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about the best medications for you and review what you’re currently taking.

Read about optimizing medications, here: https://www.cmaj.ca/content/193/6/E215