

## OVER 65s ON MEDICATION NEEDED FOR HOSPITAL RESEARCH

One in five medications taken by older people is harmful or unnecessary, leading to researchers at the Kolling Institute to study deprescribing in high risk patients.

Researchers at the Kolling Institute, based at Royal North Shore Hospital, are investigating the effects of polypharmacy, when a person takes more than five medications, in older adults.

As part of the project, researchers want to find out how patients' medicines are changed in hospital and how patients, and their GPs, are told about the changes.

Professor Sarah Hilmer said patients can leave hospital unaware of the reasons why they have been taken off a specific medication, and in some cases their GP would re-prescribe it to them.

“Supervised withdrawal of inappropriate medicines (deprescribing) is safe and may improve quality of life in older people,” she said.

“One of the aims of the project is to improve the communication between clinicians in the hospital and the patient; as well as the communication that is sent to the patient's GP so they understand the reasons why a medication may have been stopped in hospital.

“Sometimes older people may be taking a type of drug that was needed when they were younger, but as they get older it may not improve their long-term outcomes.”

Inappropriate medicines are a major burden to older adults and the health system.

Researchers are seeking people aged 65 years or older, who take at least one regular medicine and have been in admitted to hospital in the past five years; and/or their care givers.

Participants will take part in 30-60 minute discussions on how to best communicate medication changes in hospitals to patients. Reimbursement for travel and parking will be provided.

For those interested in participating, contact Ms Mai Duong at [mai.duong@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mai.duong@health.nsw.gov.au) or phone 9926 4869.