

Adults Over 50 Often Ignore Prescription Drug Warning Labels



Adults over age 50 often ignore prescription drug labels that highlight key safety information, a new study suggests.

The researchers say the labels should be redesigned and placed in a more prominent place to prevent dangerous medication errors. The warning labels include instructions such as, "Do not drive while taking this medication," or "Avoid smoking while taking this drug," the Los Angeles Times reports.

The study, published in the journal PLoS One, found participants over age 50 were much less likely to pay attention to the warning labels than those ages 20 to 29. The researchers tracked participants' eye movements while they looked at prescription vials with warning labels affixed to them, and later tested what they remembered about the labels.

They discovered younger participants scanned the labels more actively, while older ones looked at the labels with a more fixed gaze.

The article notes that the findings are particularly significant because older adults often take more medications than younger ones, which puts them at greater risk of making drug errors.

Older participants were less likely to recall the warning labels, usually because they had not noticed them in the first place, the article notes. When they noticed the labels, they were as likely as younger participants to recall them. There are no federal standards that regulate prescription warning labels.

The researchers recommend that since all study participants looked at the large white pharmacy labels, warnings could be more effective if they were featured prominently in the white space, instead of a separate location on the label.

To learn more about prescription drugs, [click here](#).