

Risk of bleeds and death with daily aspirin use higher than thought
Health/Science

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The risk of long-term aspirin use causing major bleeding and death is higher than previously thought, with over-75s particularly vulnerable, a study suggests.

By Haroon Siddique for The Guardian (UK), June 14, 2017 The risk of long-term aspirin use causing major bleeding and death is higher than previously thought, with over-75s particularly vulnerable, a study suggests. Around 40% of adults aged 75 or over in the UK take a daily aspirin and lifelong treatment is recommended for patients who have previously had a heart attack or stroke.

The preventative effects are well-established in people who have suffered a major heart event, reducing the risk of another by 20%. But Prof Peter Rothwell, from Oxford University and the lead author of the study, said there are about 20,000 major bleeds and around 3,000 deaths caused by aspirin or other antiplatelet drugs each year. He says the answer is for people taking aspirin to be prescribed heartburn drugs known as proton-pump inhibitors (PPIs), which reduce the risk of bleeding by 70% to 90%. Currently they are prescribed only in a minority of cases. The research, published in the Lancet on Tuesday, found that for patients under 65 taking daily aspirin to prevent a recurring stroke or heart attack, the annual rate of bleeds requiring hospital admission was approximately 1.5%, compared with 3.5% for patients aged 75 to 84, and 5% for those aged 85 or over. [⋮] <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/jun/14/aspirin-use-higher-than-thought>