

# **Eph90 evolution of the prevalence of polypharmacy in a poor population of the colombian caribbean during 2019-2021**

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## **Abstract**

Today, polypharmacy represents one of the major concerns of health systems in the world due to the risks associated with the inappropriate use of drugs and its impact on growing pharmaceutical spending. The aim of this study is to estimate the variation in the prevalence of polypharmacy during 2019-2021. Cross sectional descriptive study of polymedicated patients during 2019-2021 was developed. Data was extracted from the individual outpatient dispense records from a health insurance company in Colombia.

Polypharmacy was defined as mild, moderate and severe when patients consumed among 5-9, 10-15 and  $\geq 15$  medications in at least a continuous month throughout the years 2019-2021. Prevalence and characteristics as age and gender in polymedicated patients were estimated. 429.967 patients were identified as consumers of medicines in 2021. The overall prevalence of polymedication was 29.2%, 3 pp. higher than 2019. The mean number of medications per patient was  $6.79 \pm 2.1$  in 2019 and  $6.93 \pm 0.04$  in 2021. Mild polymedication was about 26.9%, moderate 2.1% and severe 0.2% in 2021, 1.6pp., 0.9pp. and 0.1pp. higher than 2019 respectively. The average age of a patient in 2021 with mild, moderate and severe polymedication was 56.15 (CI95%: 56.1-56.2), 64.5 (CI 95%: The observed increase in polypharmacy could be influenced by the increase in the prescription rate and by a less and less interaction between the different prescribers. These, represent significant risks to the health of patients and can significantly impact pharmaceutical spending. This study contributes to decision-making on health risk management and drug consumption control, especially in the elderly population.

**Keywords:** Polypharmacy, Colombian Caribbean, pharmaceutical