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# European Union Geriatric Medicine Society

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Mr. Peter Arlett

Concerns : Commission Public Consultation : An Assessment of the Community System of Pharmacovigilance

Dear Mr. Peter Arlett,

The EUGMS represents all Physicians mainly active in the health care of the very old people (geriatric patients) with a mean age of 85 years. The EUGMS represents 14.000 physicians.

The EUGMS read this Final Document and find this document an excellent one. We agree with all the statements.

The EUGMS has however a major concern: as for children medications are not mandatory tested before use in the group of the very old people.

In the future an increasing part (the majority) of medications will be used by the group of very old persons. In this group of patients most medications have never been tested! The medications are only tested on adults of (generally) less than 60 years, without any co-morbidity (generally exclusion criteria in the trials).

Another important statement is that many side effects of medication in the very old persons are never reported. The patient, the family and the professional carers frequently think that the presenting symptoms are caused by aging or by co-morbidities. The final result is that the administration of this medication with side effects is not interrupted, but generally another medication is added to take away this symptoms (in fact the result of side effects). At the end many older persons are given more and more medication, with bad results, a high cost for the social security and a poor quality of life for the older patients.

One third of all admission of geriatric patients is caused by side effects of medications, overdoses, interactions etc.

In **conclusion** the EUGMS proposes:

1. mandatory clinical trials on patients with a mean age of 80 years,

2. a campaign for more reporting side effects of medication in older persons,
3. sensibilisation of the professionals for possible side effects of medication in the older persons.

Sincerely Yours,

Prof.Dr.J.P.Baeyens

Member of the executive committee of EUGMS, Chair of the EU working group.