



DOES ADHD MEDICATION REALLY HELP KIDS? REPORT #2999

BACKGROUND: There are many medications available to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD. The medications prescribed to both children and adults are categorized as stimulants and nonstimulants. Stimulants are considered the first-line treatment for ADHD. Under this category fall amphetamines along with methylphenidate, the most widely used treatment for ADHD. Nonstimulants are prescribed to patients who don't tolerate or see benefits from stimulant medications. Approximately 30 percent of patients do not respond to stimulants. There are three nonstimulants approved to treat ADHD: atomoxetine, guanficine, and clonidine. A doctor may prescribe nonstimulants for use alongside stimulants to treat symptoms that the stimulant does not alleviate.

(Source: <https://www.additudemag.com/adhd-medication-for-adults-and-children/>)

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES: Medications used to treat ADHD have both advantages and disadvantages. By reducing symptoms of hyperactivity, impulsivity, and inattention, medication can help patients to do better at school and work. They can also improve interactions with family members and friends. Treatment with ADHD medication is shown to improve motor vehicle driving skills and lessens the risk of accidents based on results from large medical registry studies of stimulant medications. Consistent use of medication reduces delinquency, substance abuse, criminality, and suicidality. There are two known disadvantages with ADHD medications. One is that they can cause unwanted side effects like insomnia, appetite loss, or nausea. However, these side effects can be controlled by reducing the dose or changing medications. The second disadvantage pertains to stimulant medications, which are addictive substances. Being misused in a way that is not prescribed by a doctor can lead to addiction. They can also be diverted to others for either substance abuse or performance enhancement which is especially problematic for immediate release stimulants.

(Source: <https://www.adhdawarenessmonth.org/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-adhd-medication/>)

ADVANCES IN TREATMENT: The FDA has approved two devices for ADHD treatment in children. The first device is the Monarch external Trigeminal Nerve Stimulation (eTNS) System, a trigeminal nerve stimulator. Whereas the vagal nerve stimulator is used to control epileptic seizures, this therapy does not require surgical insertion. The trigeminal nerve stimulator sits on the face. A small-scale study using data from the device manufacturer suggests that about half of pediatric ADHD patients responded to use of this device. The FDA also approved a digital therapeutic treatment that uses a video game called EndeavorRx to treat ADHD. The sensory stimulus and motor challenges of the game target the neural pathways that control focus and attention. Studies sponsored by the device's manufacturer suggest that the prescribed use of the game improves attention and has few adverse effects. Both devices may prove to be valuable additions to medication and behavior management, however more evidence of effectiveness is needed in guiding clinical decisions.

(Source: <https://www.psychiatrictimes.com/view/advances-in-treatments-for-adhd>)

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