

Withdrawal symptoms among chronic users of oral benzodiazepines for anxiety disorders

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Current Psychiatry. Ain Shams University (Print).

2010 v17 n3

The aim of this study is to describe the characteristics of patients with anxiety disorders, who use oral BDZ for a long period of time (more than 2 years) and to identify the withdrawal symptoms they experience and the most annoying withdrawal symptom which may play a key role in hindering the discontinuation of the drug and delaying abstinence.

423 BDZ users (for more than 2 years) suffering from anxiety disorders were subjected to Psychiatric history and examination, they were diagnosed according to DSM-IV diagnostic criteria, using SCID-I. Patients were asked to fill in a designed questionnaire about the symptoms they suffered from after decreasing the doses of BDZ and then they were asked to specify the most subjectively annoying withdrawal symptom.

The study revealed age, gender and specific diagnoses of this sample of patients suffering from different types of anxiety disorders and using BDZ for more than 2 years and correlation was done with the type of BDZ, the duration of its use and the most subjectively annoying withdrawal symptom.

The demographic and clinical characteristics, the type of BDZ and the duration of its use could significantly affect the perception of the patient about withdrawal symptoms and subsequently his ability to discontinue BDZ.