A Review of Pharmacological Management of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

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Abstract

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a common psychological diagnosis in children. This disorder impacts children and adolescents in all areas of life, including academic performance, extracurricular activities, and social interactions. ADHD can continue into adulthood where unemployment and substance abuse has been described. Although behavioral therapy is recommended for all patients with ADHD, medication management typically is initiated soon after diagnosis. Psychostimulants remain the primary medication of choice. This review focuses on the clinical use of psychostimulant medication in children and adolescents. The pharmacodynamic and pharmacokinetic differences between the newest long-acting formulations as well as commonly encountered adverse drug reactions, with suggested management strategies, will be highlighted. Non-stimulant therapy with atomoxetine or alpha2-adrenergic agonists is also reviewed. These agents may be warranted for patients who cannot tolerate psychostimulant therapy or have a comorbid condition. Finally, the 8-year multimodal treatment study results are also discussed.