Quantifying the Benefits and Risks of Methylphenidate as Treatment for Childhood Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Philip Shaw, MD, PhD


Approximately 6% of school-aged children in the United States are prescribed medication for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which is roughly 1 child in every classroom.1 Psychostimulants, such as methylphenidate, are the most commonly prescribed and have been a first-line medication for ADHD for more than 50 years.2 Establishing the efficacy and safety of methylphenidate in children is of the utmost importance. Meta-analyses, which quantitatively combine and critically evaluate the findings of trials, are important in this endeavor.