Screening for adult attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder in high-dose benzodiazepine dependent patients.


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Abstract

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES:
Adult attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is frequent in patients with substance use disorders (SUD), but information on its prevalence in high-dose benzodiazepine (BZD) dependence is lacking. We estimated the prevalence of adult ADHD in a group of treatment-seeking high-dose BZD dependent patients according to a valid screening tool and explored the demographic and clinical characteristics of patients that screened positive for ADHD (ADHD+) in comparison to those that screened negative (ADHD-).

METHODS:
We prospectively recruited 167 consecutive patients with high-dose BZD dependence and screened them for adult ADHD with the World Health Organization Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale version 1.1 (ASRS-v1.1) Symptom Checklist Part A. We compared demographic and clinical characteristics in ADHD+ and ADHD- groups.

RESULTS:
Fifty-three patients (31.7% of the sample) were positive to adult ADHD screening. ADHD+ patients showed a significantly larger prevalence of poly-drug abuse than ADHD- ones. BZD formulation and active principle significantly differed between the two groups. The other clinical variables, including psychiatric comorbidity, as well as the demographic ones, did not differ in ADHD+ versus ADHD- comparison.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS:
Adult ADHD may be common in treatment-seeking high-dose BZD dependent patients according to ASRS-v1.1 Symptom Checklist Part A.

SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE:
Screening for ADHD in this type of SUD with this questionnaire is quick and may offer useful information for prognosis and treatment.