Caregivers' Priorities and Observed Outcomes of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Medication for Their Children

Ross Melissa PhD; Nguyen, Vy PharmD; Bridges, John F. P. PhD; Ng, Xinyi PhD; Reeves, Gloria MD; Frosch, Emily MD; dosReis, Susan PhD

Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: November 28, 2017
doi: 10.1097/DBP.0000000000000530

ABSTRACT:

Objective:
To document variability among caregivers' priorities when considering medication to treat their Children's attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and explore associations between these priorities and medication-related improvements.

Methods:
Caregivers of children, ages 4 to 14 years, diagnosed with ADHD were recruited from outpatient clinics and support groups across Maryland. A survey gathered data on caregiver-reported concerns when considering ADHD medication, demographic characteristics, and observed and desired improvements in their child's ADHD. A validated Best-Worst Scaling instrument assessed priorities among 16 concerns when considering ADHD medication. Latent class analysis identified subgroups with similar ADHD medication concerns. Differences in self-reported medication-related improvements were examined across subgroups.

Results:
The 184 participants (mean = 42 yrs) were primarily the biological mother, 68% white and 25% black. Their children were mostly male (73%) and using medication (81%). Overall, the most important ADHD medication concerns were the child becoming a successful adult (p < 0.0001), school behavior improvements (p < 0.0001), and better grades (p < 0.0001). Others thinking badly of the child was a significantly less important concern (p < 0.0001). Three subgroups were identified: short-term outcomes-oriented group (39%), long-term outcomes-oriented group (37%), and side effects/safety-oriented group (27%). Relative to the other 2 groups, a smaller proportion of the side effects/safety-oriented group desired these improvements (p < 0.2618).

Conclusion:
Most caregivers prioritize short- and long-term outcomes when considering ADHD medication. However, those most concerned with long- or short-term outcomes tended to desire additional improvements in their child's ADHD.