Are the effects of methylphenidate uncertain?

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES:
A recent systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials of methylphenidate (MPH) in children and adolescents by a Cochrane group, led by Storebø, raised concern around the level of evidence supporting the use of this medication for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children and adolescents. This led to several critical responses from a number of ADHD experts.

METHODS:
This paper reviews the conclusions reached from the Storebø meta-analysis by a critical analysis of methodologies used along with drawing on extant literature.

RESULTS:
The controversy raised by the Cochrane meta-analysis should lead to a balanced reflection on the research priorities and needs for the field.

CONCLUSIONS:
It is hoped the controversy will ultimately lead to improve the quality of the research on the efficacy, effectiveness and tolerability of MPH for ADHD.