

Treatment of Adult ADHD without Stimulants: Effectiveness in A Dually Diagnosed Correctional Population

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Abstract

Adult ADHD has received increased attention in the past two decades. There is a complex relationship between ADHD and substance use disorders, with ADHD being a risk factor for and a moderator in the treatment of addiction. ADHD is also a risk factor for the development of antisocial personality disorder. As a result, ADHD is prevalent in a correctional dually diagnosed population. This retrospective chart review reports on the effectiveness of the treatment for ADHD in a population with substance use disorders, residing in a correctional community center for treatment and reintegration purposes. Only patients with a primary diagnosis of ADHD were included and only nonstimulants were used. After an average of four visits, or approximately four months, patient showed a moderate response with a pretreatment to posttreatment effect size of 1.4. Sixty-four percent of patients responded and 35% remitted, according to the Clinical Global Index Severity Scale as the primary outcome measure. While stimulants are considered the first-line treatment for ADHD, they clearly present challenges in certain populations, especially in patients with significant antisocial and addiction histories. It does appear that non-stimulants are effective in this population. It is speculated that the response and remission rate could be improved by adding ADHD specific psychosocial interventions.