

Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder: The Effect of Psychostimulants with or without Atypical Neuroleptic use on Comorbid Anxiety

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Background: Many studies suggest a relationship between attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder (AD(H)D) and anxiety (Anx). Among the controversies, however, is whether psychostimulants cause an increase in anxiety-.... (Bagwell CL 2006). While some studies have investigated the effect of psychostimulants on anxiety, none have studied whether anxiety increases versus pre-psychostimulant use (Vance ALA 1999).

Objectives: To investigate changes in Achenbach Child Behavioral Checklist (CBCL) anxiety T scores pre and post administration of psychostimulant therapy; further if atypical neuroleptic concomitant medication therapy has an effect on anxiety when employed.

Method: Retrospective chart analysis of 134 (M-98/F-36) referred students (mean age: 10.2 years +/- 3.4) diagnosed with AD(H)D by DSMIV behavioral and cognitive measures with parent completed CBCL both before and after treatment with a psychostimulant at least 4 months apart. A comparison was made on frequency of anxiety with those subjects in whom a concomitant neuroleptic was co-administered.

Results:

Psychostimulant only: N=80

Anx initial T score >65 =24; 20 (83%) dec T score to <65

Initial score <65 = 56; 3 (5%) inc T score to >65

Psychostimulant + Atypical Neuroleptic: N=54

Anx initial T score >65 = 15; 7 (47%) dec T score to <65

Initial T score <65 = 39; inc T score >65 = 12 (31%)

Conclusion:

- Anx is a prevalent comorbid dx in AD(H)D
- Anx is not necessarily aggravated by stimulant Rx
- Atypical neuroleptic co-administration does not necessarily protect against increase in Anx

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