TITLE: Discontinuation Strategies for Patients with Long-Term Benzodiazepine Use: Clinical Evidence and Guidelines

DATE: 22 January 2015

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the clinical evidence regarding strategies to safely and effectively discontinue adult patients from long-term benzodiazepine use?

2. What are the evidence-based guidelines regarding discontinuation of long-term benzodiazepine use?

KEY FINDINGS

Three systematic reviews and meta-analyses, two randomized controlled trials, and five non-randomized studies were identified regarding strategies to safely and effectively discontinue adult patients from long-term benzodiazepine use.

METHODS

A limited literature search was conducted on key resources including PubMed, The Cochrane Library (2015, Issue 1), University of York Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD) databases, Canadian and major international health technology agencies, as well as a focused Internet search. Methodological filters were applied to limit retrieval to health technology assessments, systematic reviews, meta-analyses and guidelines. The results of a focused search (with main concepts appearing in title or major subject heading) were also included. Where possible, retrieval was limited to the human population. The search was also limited to English language documents published between January 1, 2010 and January 19, 2015. Internet links were provided, where available.

SELECTION CRITERIA

One reviewer screened citations and selected studies based on the inclusion criteria presented in Table 1.
### Table 1: Selection Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Adults in a community (outpatient) setting with long-term (&gt; 3 months) benzodiazepine use (frequent and infrequent users)</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Intervention             | • Interventions to promote the discontinuation of benzodiazepine use  
                           • Interventions to manage withdrawal symptoms when discontinuing benzodiazepines |
| Comparator               | • Abrupt benzodiazepine withdrawal alone  
                           • Gradual benzodiazepine withdrawal alone  
                           • No comparator |
| Outcomes                 | • Clinical effectiveness  
                           • Evidence-based guidelines |
| Study Designs            | Health technology assessments, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, randomized controlled trials, non-randomized studies, evidence-based guidelines |

### RESULTS

Rapid Response reports are organized so that the higher quality evidence is presented first. Therefore, health technology assessment reports, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses are presented first. These are followed by randomized controlled trials, non-randomized studies, and evidence-based guidelines.

Three systematic reviews and meta-analyses, two randomized controlled trials, and five non-randomized studies were identified regarding strategies to safely and effectively discontinue adult patients from long-term benzodiazepine use. No relevant health technology assessments or evidence-based guidelines were identified.

Additional references of potential interest are provided in the appendix.

#### Health Technology Assessments

No literature identified.

#### Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses

   PubMed: PM24493654

   PubMed: PM24905348

   http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3162180  
   PubMed: PM22152740
Randomized Controlled Trials


Non-Randomized Studies


Guidelines and Recommendations

No literature identified.

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APPENDIX – FURTHER INFORMATION:

Clinical Practice Guidelines – Uncertain Methodology

See: Withdrawal, page 3

Review Articles

See: Effectiveness of withdrawal interventions, page 7


PubMed: PM22568872