TITLE: Long-Term Use of Benzodiazepines: Clinical Effectiveness and Safety

DATE: 06 July 2015

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the clinical effectiveness of long-term versus short-term use of benzodiazepines?

2. What is the clinical evidence regarding the safety of long-term use of benzodiazepines?

KEY FINDINGS

Two systematic reviews, one meta-analysis, and three randomized controlled trials were identified regarding the clinical effectiveness and safety of the long-term use of benzodiazepines.

METHODS

A limited literature search was conducted on key resources including MedLine, The Cochrane Library, University of York Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD) databases, Canadian and major international health technology agencies, as well as a focused Internet search. No filters were applied to limit the retrieval by study type. Where possible, retrieval was limited to the human population. The search was also limited to English language documents published between January 1st, 2010 and June 30, 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 taking any benzodiazepines long-term for any indication</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Long-term benzodiazepine treatment (defined as treatment of more than 5 days; include other definitions of “long term”, e.g., 30 days, etc.)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Comparators              | Q1: Short-term benzodiazepine treatment (5 days or less; “short vs long term”)  
                             | Q2: Short-term treatment; No comparator |
| Outcomes                 | Clinical effectiveness  
                             | Safety (e.g., adverse events, cognitive impairment) |
| Study Designs            | Health technology assessments, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, randomized controlled trials |

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.

Two systematic reviews, one meta-analysis, and three randomized controlled trials were identified regarding the clinical effectiveness and safety of the long-term use of benzodiazepines. No relevant health technology assessments were identified.

Additional references of potential interest are provided in the appendix.

Health Technology Assessments
No literature identified.

Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses


Randomized Controlled Trials


PREPARED BY:
Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health
Tel: 1-866-898-8439
www.cadth.ca
APPENDIX – FURTHER INFORMATION:

Previous CADTH Reports


Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses – Alternate Outcomes


Non-Randomized Studies

Alternate Definitions for Long-Term Benzodiazepine Use


Extended or Chronic Benzodiazepine Use


Cumulative Effects


Review Articles


