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Correlates of benzodiazepine use in individuals with insomnia.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE: Although benzodiazepines (BZDs) are commonly used in the treatment of insomnia, there is little information about psychological, health, and sociodemographic correlates associated with their use.

OBJECTIVE: This study examined correlates of benzodiazepine use for sleep in a clinical sample of patients seeking treatment for insomnia at a sleep disorders clinic.

PATIENTS AND METHODS: The sample consisted of 97 individuals evaluated at a sleep disorders clinic for a presenting complaint of insomnia. Two groups were formed, including one with 61 patients who had been using BZDs for sleep for an average of 56.6 months (SD=68.0), and another with 36 patients who had insomnia but were not using BZDs or any other sleep aid. Logistic regressions, adjusting for an age difference between the user and non-user groups, were performed to examine variables associated with BZD use. Independent variables included demographic, medical, insomnia-related and psychological parameters and subjective sleep-wake characteristics. Unadjusted regression analyses were performed to identify factors associated with a pattern of long-term use (>12 months) within the user group.

RESULTS: Age was a significant predictor of BZD use (OR=1.84, P = 0.0002). Significant age-adjusted predictors of BZD use included perceived insomnia severity (OR=1.17, P = 0.038), depressive symptoms, (OR=1.108, P = 0.009) and state and trait anxiety symptoms (OR=1.062, P = 0.016; OR=1.084, P = 0.005, respectively). Significant predictors of long-term use (>12 months) were age of insomnia onset (OR=0.951, P = 0.0214), more frequent BZD use (OR=3.284, P = 0.0221), and higher state-anxiety (OR=1.106, P = 0.0471).

CONCLUSIONS: Age, psychological variables and perceived sleep disturbances severity, are associated with BZD use in patients with insomnia.

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