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The Truth about Treatments for ADHD

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In its television program on ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) in children, BBC1's Panorama, reports how doctors are sounding warning bells over thousands of children having behavioral problems being prescribed anti-psychotic drugs that have dangerous side effects such as, insomnia, dizziness and heart problems, and even death.

These tranquillizers which are designed for the treatment of psychosis and schizophrenia in grown ups, are actually being used to calm hyperactive children. For example, about 8,000 children are on anti- psychotics such as Risperdal and Zyprexa even though they have been linked to several health problems.

From the Royal College of Psychiatrists, Dr Tim Kendall, stated that he was aware of children even at ten being given the schizophrenia drugs for up to five years.

Besides this, the regular drugs used to treat ADHD such as Concerta and Ritalin are not really as effective as we would like them to be in the long run and their benefits are grossly exaggerated.

A study in the United States finds that not only are they not very effective but they are also capable of stunting the growth of a child if used for an extended period of time.

Six hundred American children with ADHD from all over the country had been monitored in the US since the 1990s by The Multimodal Treatment Study of Children with ADHD.

It came to the conclusion in 1999, that after a year, medication was more effective than behavioral therapy for children with ADHD.

As a result of these instances of prescription were trebled. In 2006 drugs like Concerta and Ritalin were prescribed to about 55,000 children, costing the NHS £28m.

But the study also concluded that over the long term, three years, such ADHD drugs as Concerta and Ritalin had no verifiable benefits for children.

Co-author William Pelham from the University of Buffalo has been quoted as saying, "I think that we exaggerated the beneficial impact of medication in the first study.

"We had thought that children medicated longer would have better outcomes. That didn't happen to be the case.

"The children had a substantial decrease in their rate of growth so they

weren't growing as much as other kids both in terms of their height and in terms of their weight.

"And the second was that there were no beneficial effects -none."

Pelham continued, "In the short run they will help the child behave better, in the long run it won't. And that information should be made very clear to parents."

Pelham believes that behavioral therapy and Omega-3 should be the first steps in helping a child with ADHD.

From the Royal College of Psychiatrists, Dr Tim Kendall, who is working at preparing new NHS guidelines with regard to the treatment of ADHD stated, "A generous understanding would be to say that doctors have reached the point where they don't know what else to offer."

Janssen-Cilag, the manufacturers of Risperdal and Concerta at Buckinghamshire, however, described their drugs as being "very valuable treatments".

The U.S maker of Zyprexa, Eli Lilly, claimed never to have promoted the drug for the treatment of ADHD and had no future intention of doing so so.

Novartis, the Swiss makers of Ritalin, was unavailable for comments.

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