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SOCIETAL IMPACT OF XANAX

Since the early 1980s, Xanax has been prescribed as an anti-anxiety medication to patients around the world. Today, it remains that most commonly prescribed psychiatric drug, with Forbes reporting that nearly 50 million prescriptions are written for the medication or its generic equivalent each year. Also known as alprazolam, Xanax is a benzodiazepine available by prescription only. Doctors prescribe it for a number of reasons, such as for the treatment of depression, phobias, and even premenstrual syndrome. However, the primary use of this medication is as a short-term means of managing the symptoms of anxiety.





after taking the medication and start to wear off in about



HOW XANAX WORKS

Xanax works by slowing down the chemical over-activity in the brain that is responsible for causing anxiety. Benzodiazepines bind to gamma-amino-butyric acid (GABA) receptors in the brain, releasing a calming effect into the body's central nervous system. Within minutes of taking it, both the body and mind become more relaxed and calm. In fact, the National Institutes of Health found that the effects of Xanax generally begin as soon as 8 to 25 minutes after ingestion. From that time, the effects rapidly increase to achieve more than 90 percent of Xanax benefits within the hour. Peak effects of Xanax usually occur approximately 90 minutes after ingestion, after which time the benefits begin to wear off.

ANXIETY TREATMENT

Doctors and researchers have found that Xanax is useful in the treatment of generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorders, and other anxiety disorders like post-traumatic stress disorder. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, 40 million adults suffer from some form of anxiety disorder, which is the most prevalent type of mental illness in the U.S. Anxiety and panic disorders can incite sudden and often unexplained episodes of fear that impact the day-to-day lives of those who suffer with them.

SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY AND PANIC DISORDERS

SUDDEN, UNEXPLAINED EPISODES OF FEAR

PAI PITATIONS



MENTAL

ANGUISH

DIZZINESS

LOSS OF

APPETITE

People who take Xanax may be advised to do so sporadically and only as needed, or on a daily basis. It may be the sole form of treatment or prescribed in combination with anti-depressants or other medications. Under the supervision of a doctor, Xanax can provide significant short-term physical, mental, and emotional benefits. Many people with anxiety disorders are affected physically, mentally, professionally, and socially by their symptoms.

With Xanax, panic attacks may quickly subside, making it easier to carry out tasks and maintain relationships on a daily basis. However, the effects of Xanax are not long term and always wear off. Over time, patients may find that prescribed dosages are inadequate for alleviating anxiety symptoms.

5 | THE XANAX THREAT

RECREATIONAL VALUE OF XANAX

Xanax is a prescription medication with real medical benefits, but it is often abused and used recreationally to achieve a 'high' or other desired effect. The non-medical use of Xanax is illegal, but it continues to be a problem across the U.S. In fact, Dr. Jane Carlisle Maxwell, a senior research scientist at the University of Texas School of Social Work, reports that recreational use of prescription medications is a growing problem – especially among teenagers and young adults.

ABUSE OF XANAX

Xanax is preferred among recreational drug users because it is easy to acquire and is fastacting. The effects of Xanax are often magnified and enhanced when combined with other substances, such as alcohol. People who take alprazolam prior to drinking alcohol achieve an additive effect that makes the alcohol more potent than it is when consumed alone. Similar effects are achieved when Xanax is taken in combination with other drugs and substances.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration found that an average of 15.7 million adults and adolescents engaged in the non-medical use of prescription drugs every year between 2005 and 2011. Of those, more than 8 in 10 lived in urban or metropolitan cities rather than rural areas. Often, people who abuse Xanax acquire the medication from a parent or friend. Some even get their own prescriptions by visiting a doctor or treatment facility. However, the prevalence of benzodiazepines makes it relatively easy to purchase illegally for as little as \$1 per pill or less from dealers.

Though it is not a stimulant or 'party' drug like ecstasy, some people use the tranquilizing effects of Xanax to bring them down from a stimulant-induced high.

15.7 MILLION Adult and adolescents engage in recreational use of prescription drugs every year

TAKING XANAX WITH NARCOTICS

Many young people and adults take and abuse prescription medications like benzodiazepines because they are perceived as less dangerous than 'street' drugs. However, despite being regulated by the Food and Drug Administration, Xanax and other benzodiazepines taken outside their intended use can be dangerous. This is especially true when Xanax is combined with narcotics, which is a popular combination among recreational users. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the combined use of benzodiazepines and narcotic pain killers was responsible for more than 33,700 emergency room admissions in the U.S. in 2010 alone. That is up from just over 5,000 in the year 2000.



THE PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND EMOTIONAL EFFECTS OF XANAX

Xanax provides a physical effect that can help contribute to mental and emotional effects as well. Given in the right dosages, the medication helps suppress chemical activity within the brain and central nervous system, resulting in a calming effect. However, unwanted side effects often accompany Xanax usage. Common, but minor symptoms include headache, nausea, dry mouth, and drowsiness. In rare cases, people develop allergic reactions to Xanax, which may induce facial and neck swelling or hives.

SHORT TERM USE

During the first few days of use, people taking Xanax may feel sleepy and somewhat uncoordinated. It does not take long for the body to adjust the drug, making it less potent over time. Because of this, The Food and Drug Administration has only approved Xanax for short term use in patients for a period of up to 8 weeks.

In addition to the physical effects of Xanax, the medication can induce mental and emotional effects as well. Especially when taken in large dosages, this drug can cause lowered inhibitions, cognitive learning impairments, and an overall state of euphoria.

LARGE DOSAGES OF XANAX TAKEN ALONG WITH OTHER SUBSTANCES CAN INDUCE SERIOUS HEALTH COMPLICATIONS, SUCH AS:

Blurred vision | Disorientation | Slurred speech | Lower threshold of pain | respiratory suppression

OVERDOSING ON XANAX WITH OR WITHOUT ANOTHER SUBSTANCE CAN LEAD TO:

Unconsciousness | Coma | death.

ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCE

Although Xanax is one of the most commonly prescribed medications, it is also one of the most addictive. Misuse of alprazolam can quickly lead to addiction and physical dependence. Prolonged use of Xanax causes the brain to stop making as much GABA as it naturally produces. GABA helps regulate brain and central nervous system activity. The body naturally adjusts to the steady stream of benzodiazepine, creating a tolerance for the drug. With time, people taking Xanax may require an increased dosage in order to achieve the same benefits the drug initially provided. In the meantime, GABA production slows down tremendously, and the body becomes dependent on Xanax instead of itself.

DEPENDENCY OF XANAX

Xanax addiction and dependency can occur quickly and without warning. According to the National Institutes of Health, Xanax benefits outweigh risks for short term use of 2 to 4 weeks, but prolonged usage beyond that time places an individual at a high risk of dependency and prolonged use.

COMMON SIGNS OF DEPENDENCE INCLUDE:

- Needing higher dosages to achieve the same effect that was once available at lower dosages
- Symptoms of withdrawal when they are without Xanax
- Insomnia
- Anxiety
- Dizziness

STOPPING XANAX

When an individual stops taking Xanax, he or she may suffer moderate to severe withdrawal symptoms. Physical dependence takes a long time to build up, and it can take a while for the body to return to normal. When Xanax is no longer introduced into the body, GABA levels may remain low, taking a while for the brain to begin producing normal amounts again. In the meantime, the lack of sedative can allow uncontrolled activity in the brain, which may even cause seizures.

The severity of withdrawal symptoms is often in proportion the extent of Xanax dependency. For example, people who have been taking 2 grams of alprazolam each day for 8 weeks may experience milder withdrawal effects than someone who has been taking 6 grams daily for several months.

PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM XANAX WITHDRAWAL MAY EXPERIENCE:

- · Disturbances to their sleep
- Irritability
- Extreme anxiety
- Heart palpitations
- Panic attacks
- Weight loss

Withdrawal from Xanax is often ironically similar to the symptoms that caused a person to begin taking Xanax in the first place - only much more severe.

RECREATIONAL USERS OF PRESCRIPTION

DRUGS LIVE IN URBAN AREAS

IN 10

PHYSICAL DEPENDENCY TO XANAX

Anyone who is addicted to Xanax or who may have developed a physical dependency should not attempt to go through withdrawal alone. Dependency can cause withdrawal symptoms to last many weeks or months before the brain's GABA production and chemical balances return to normal. During this time period, there is a higher chance of relapse. Furthermore, withdrawal can produce convulsions that, while rare, can be life threatening. Detox and withdrawal should always occur under the close supervision of a medical professional.

