

Evidence-Based BZRA Discontinuation 2: Symptom Relief

Use the link at the bottom of the page for details and references

For the affected 40%, BZWS symptoms will present during deprescription and recovery

1. In all but the simplest cases, expect new symptoms and/or an increase in the current symptoms.
2. Even with a carefully managed taper, many patients experience significant symptoms.

Adjunctive medications for anxiety relief

1. Other BZDs and Z-drugs will only provide temporary relief and lengthen deprescription.
2. Consider these medications:
 - Adrenergic inhibiting agents
 - Mono-amine agents
 - Serotonin receptor agents
 - Anti-psychotic medications
 - Sodium channel blockers
 - Calcium channel modulators
 - Glutamine system agents
 - Hormones
 - Plant-based medicines, including CBD

Non-medication approaches for anxiety relief

1. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) – strong evidence of effectivity. Initiate this as early as possible.
2. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
3. Acupuncture (weak evidence), massage
4. Self-administered anxiety management
 - Exercise; Movement Meditation; Guided Imagery; Music Therapy
 - Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR); Religious / Spiritual Interventions
 - Relaxation / Breathing Interventions; Biofeedback

Adjunctive medications for insomnia relief

1. Doxepine (Silenor®). This sleep drug is approved for use in people who have trouble staying asleep. Silenor may help with sleep maintenance by blocking histamine receptors.
2. Ramelteon (Rozerem®). This works on the sleep-wake cycle, not by depressing the CNS. It is for people who have trouble falling asleep and can be used long-term, as it has shown no evidence of abuse or dependence.
3. Suvorexant (Belsomra®). An orexin receptor antagonist, it is approved by the FDA to treat people that have insomnia due to an inability to fall asleep or to stay asleep, but may lead to persistent drowsiness.
4. Although they have their own set of problems, some antidepressant drugs, such as trazodone (Desyrel®), are very good at treating sleeplessness and anxiety.
5. Over-the-counter sleep aids. Most of these are antihistamines, such as diphenhydramine and doxylamine.

Non-medication approaches for insomnia relief

1. Sleep hygiene improvements, including pre-sleep preparation, timing, duration and lighting changes.
2. Natural biological remedies, such as melatonin or valerian root supplements, lavender oil (Silexan®), chamomile tea, magnesium glycinate, dl-phenylalanine, certain terpenes, milky oat seed and more.
3. Meditation and mindfulness techniques, including [CBT-I](#), [free courses](#) and [FDA-approved digital therapeutics](#).
4. Noise machines.

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