

Psychological disorders



The article I have selected to write my reaction paper for is headed ' Does Childhood Treatment of ADHD with Stimulant Medication Affect Substance Abuse in Adulthood? It is written by Nora D. Volkow and James M. Swanson and was published in The American Journal of Psychiatry. It on the whole, discusses with its readers the possible drawback of treating children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder with stimulant medication. This possible drawback it substance abuse in later life of these children and it is a very controversial topic in abnormal psychology. The article explains how it happens.

When stimulants are given to children with ADHD, the concentration of a chemical in the brain called dopamine increases. When these stimulants are misused, the patient tends to become dependent on it. Beside this, since the child with ADHD is exposed to these stimulants at a very young age, he is more likely to be in danger of drug abuse in later life. However, a few have anticipated the opposite. They say that stimulant medication treatment given to children with ADHD may even decrease the likelihood of substance abuse in later life. In order to prove which hypothesis is correct, investigation was done by a few researchers.

Observational case studies were carried out that compared a group of children with ADHD who were given stimulants with those who were not and also case studies were carried out to learn the relationship between the timing of stimulants given and the effects in later life. Both case studies concluded that there is not concrete relationship between stimulant medication treatment for ADHD children and substance abuse in later years. Based on these studies, a few finding have been discovered. The hypothesis

that claimed that stimulant medication treatment for ADHD decreases the chances of substance abuse in later life was not confirmed.

And another finding that was found was children who were given stimulant medication treatment at the age between 8 to 12 years, had a higher chance of drug abuse and personality disorders in later years and if treatment was done in earlier years, the child would then be protected from child abuse later on. However, the results of these studies may not be purely accurate. There are certain biases which need to be worked out before a solid conclusion can be made. To get more accurate results, additional case studies are in progress and early findings of these case studies do not agree with previous findings of earlier ones.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the relationship between treatment of ADHD with stimulant medication and substance abuse in later years must be figured out so that children who are in risk of drug abuse in later years can be saved. Nothing can be worse than having a disorder in early years and treating that disorder with consequences in future that may even be worse. If however, the hypothesis that stimulant medication treatment does increase the chances of children with ADHD to substance abuse in later years, alternative treatments for ADHA must be discovered that may not have such high costs.