



Navigating the tensions of stimulant prescribing for ADHD

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) has gained national and international attention in the news and social media. Both diagnostic rates and stimulant prescribing rates

- patients have access to online self-assessment tools, which can lead to unreliable conclusions and hasty diagnoses

While patients may experience a short-term improvement in many of their general mental health and emotional symptoms with stimulant medication, the goal of stimulant medications should always be to achieve sustained improvement throughout the course of a health condition. Proper ADHD treatments are chronic treatments and should be viewed as such.

Patients may find it hard to accurately locate their subjective goals on the spectrum between enhancement and treatment when they inquire about an ADHD diagnosis. Enhancement improves normal health and functioning. Treatment restores or maintains normal bodily function and cognition. This makes it challenging to decide if prescribing stimulant medication is worth the risk of harm.

Registrants should ensure an ADHD diagnosis is established according to accepted current criteria. This requires confirmation of current clinically meaningful functional impairment. It is never appropriate to prescribe stimulant medication as a performance enhancer for patients

