

Body

- I. Adderall is a psychostimulant prescribed to treat three conditions.

Listener relevance link: Understanding the intended medical uses of the drug Adderall may help you understand why the drug is so widely abused by collegians.



Listener relevance link

- A. Adderall, the brand name for amphetamine-dextroamphetamine, is a psychostimulant, one of a class of drugs intended to promote concentration, suppress hyperactivity, and promote healthy social experiences for patients (Willis, 2001).

1. Adderall stimulates the central nervous system by increasing the amount of dopamine and norepinephrine in the brain. These chemicals are neurotransmitters that help the brain send signals between nerve cells (Daley, 2004, April 20).
2. Mentally, Adderall brings about a temporary improvement in alertness, wakefulness, endurance, and motivation.
3. Physically, it can increase heart rate and blood pressure and decrease perceived need for food or sleep.

- B. Adderall is prescribed for the medical treatment of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children and adults as well as for narcolepsy and clinical depression.

1. ADHD is a neurobehavioral developmental disorder characterized by problems of attention coupled with hyperactivity.

- a. Since the mid-1990s, there has been a documented increase in the number of American children diagnosed and treated for ADHD (McCabe, Teter, & Boyd, 2004).

- b. According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (2000), symptoms must be present for at least six months for diagnosis and symptoms must be excessive for medicinal treatment.

- c. The drugs Ritalin and Dexedrine are also used to treat ADHD. Adderall, however, remains the most widely prescribed of these drugs (Willis, 2001).

- d. According to the Centers for Disease Control, approximately 4.4 million American children have been diagnosed with ADHD, and over 2.5 million of those patients have been prescribed medicine to treat the condition (2005).

2. Adderall is also prescribed to treat narcolepsy, which occurs when the brain can't normally regulate cycles of sleep and waking.

- a. Sufferers of narcolepsy experience excessive daytime sleepiness that results in episodes of suddenly falling asleep.

- b. A chronic sleep disorder, narcolepsy affects between 50,000 and 2.4 million Americans. (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, 2008).

3. Adderall can also be used to treat clinical depression.

- a. Clinical depression is a disorder characterized by low mood, a loss of interest in normal activities, and low self-esteem.