

Prescription drug dependence



Prescription drug dependence is one of the hardest forms of addiction to detect. Medication can help to relieve pain and cure disease. Medication is also misused, and it is often difficult to make a distinction between justifiable use and misuse. It is possible to develop a dependency on particular medications, including sleeping pills (barbiturates), sedatives (known as tranquillizers, e.g. benzodiazepines), painkillers, stimulants (amphetamines, psychostimulants), appetite suppressants, migraine medication and anaesthetics.



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Characteristics

Women and older people are among those most commonly affected. A variety of symptoms can make up the clinical picture of medication dependence, such as a continually increasing intake of medication, a feeling of being overworked and overloaded, insomnia, constant fatigue, exhaustion, anxiety/nervousness, impaired concentration, anxiety and depression. There may also be physical symptoms such as dizziness, palpitations, non-specific gastro-intestinal disease, diffused pain without an organic cause or psychosomatic conditions. Withdrawal symptoms may also be experienced, including sweating, trembling or even epileptic seizures.

Causes

The causes of medication dependence can be explained through a biopsychosocial model. This explains the overall risk of developing an addiction as arising from the interaction between biological susceptibilities and risk factors with psychological and social factors. With medication dependence in particular, there is a strong connection with psychological and psychosomatic symptoms and illnesses or health impairment.

Treatment

Treatment for medication dependence is a therapeutic process consisting of diagnosis, contact, motivation, detoxification, withdrawal and follow-up stages. Some aspects of the contact, motivation and follow-up phases can be carried out on an outpatient basis. Inpatient treatment with professional medical, psychological and nursing care is recommended for the medication detoxification and withdrawal phases. Medical treatment of the underlying disorders is very important. The Privatklinik Meiringen offers expert withdrawal treatment with the aim of both physical detoxification and the use of psychotherapeutic interventions to support the patient in developing insight into their own illness and to motivate him or her for further treatment. Any

mental or physical illnesses which may be underlying the medication dependence are treated as part of a comprehensive psychiatric and somatic diagnostic process. In order to achieve this, an interdisciplinary team of experts develops an individual treatment plan for each patient.

The focus of the subsequent outpatient treatment is on networking with other psychiatric facilities, doctors, addiction counselling and support groups.

Living with an addiction

Addictive disorders are diseases in the medical sense and have similarities with other chronic diseases. The mental and physical illnesses associated with medication dependence necessitate a holistic approach to therapy.

Prevention strategies

Early detection is helpful (often by family members), as is the involvement of professionals. The outpatient clinic of the Privatklinik Meiringen offers advice and information on addictions and dependencies.