

U. researchers examine effects of binge eating disorder treatment

2025-02-25

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New Rutgers research examines the viability of a common treatment for binge eating disorder while also illustrating its challenges, according to a University article.

According to Abanoub Armanious, the study's lead author and a post-baccalaureate researcher in the Rutgers Addiction Research Center at the Brain Health Institute, lisdexamfetamine dimesylate, also known as Vyvanse, began production in 2015 after approval from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). He said that its primary purpose is to treat binge eating disorder, and that it is currently the only medication available for this specific disorder.

Armanious also expanded upon his motivations for being invested in this project. He said that he wanted to have a better understanding of the treatments concerning binge eating disorder in order to direct preclinical drug development.

Morgan James, the senior author of the study and an assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, said that the study used both qualitative and quantitative forms of patient data. They utilized patient reviews of lisdexamfetamine on a popular medication platform known as Drugs.com, analyzing efficacy ratings and overall experience.

In regards to the results of the study, Armanious said that although the medication did seem to help people with binge eating, there were still some inadequacies associated with the drug. He said that people who took the medication, although they saw some success in reducing disordered eating during the day, experienced increased vulnerability at night. There were some attempts by patients to counteract these effects by taking the medication later on in the day, but this resulted in adverse consequences such as insomnia.

"The 'crash' experienced as lisdexamfetamine wears off can leave patients feeling fatigued, irritable or mentally foggy," Armanious said.

When asked about whether lisdexamfetamine should still be provided to the public, James said that the intention of the study was not to encourage or discourage use of the drug, but to gain knowledge on how the drug affects patients. He also called for a more individualized approach to treatment, citing a hope for alternative therapies and long-term results.

"Ultimately, treatment decisions should be guided by a healthcare provider based on individual patient needs," he said.

Armanious said that he hopes that this research will help the Rutgers community learn about the effect of lisdexamfetamine on patients.

"For the Rutgers community, this work signals the value of integrating subjective data into clinical research, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to treatment," James said. "We also hope this sparks dialogue about improving patient care and guiding future studies to explore these themes in more diverse, representative populations."