

Binge Eating Disorder Treatment Yields Mixed Results

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Patients taking lisdexamfetamine, commonly known as Vyvanse, for binge eating disorder treatment experienced inconsistent outcomes, according to Rutgers Health researchers.

Binge eating disorder represents "the most common eating disorder in the United States" and affects individuals across all demographic groups. Despite this prevalence, no medication was specifically developed for the condition until lisdexamfetamine received FDA approval.

Originally approved for treating ADHD, lisdexamfetamine demonstrated an ability to reduce binge eating episodes, leading to its approval for moderate to severe binge eating disorder in adults. It remains the only approved medication for this indication.

The study, published in December 2024 in *Psychiatry Research Communications*, analyzed subjective experiences of individuals using lisdexamfetamine. While many patients reported reduced binge episodes and improved appetite control, others experienced significant side effects and variable effectiveness.

Binge eating disorder involves recurring episodes of loss-of-control eating and frequently co-occurs with depression, anxiety, and obesity-related health conditions like Type 2 diabetes. Previous clinical trials showed the drug's effectiveness in reducing binge episodes for some patients, but patient-centered qualitative research was lacking.

Researchers conducted a thematic analysis of 111 anonymous reviews from Drugs.com submitted by self-identified patients with binge eating disorder. The analysis examined how personal perceptions of the medication correlated with efficacy ratings.

Key findings revealed that "higher perceived efficacy was associated with improved focus and fewer side effects" while lower ratings linked to concerns about diminishing effects, insomnia, and afternoon energy loss.

Major challenges identified include:

Many patients experienced their most intense binge urges at night, when lisdexamfetamine's appetite-suppressing effects had worn off, creating evening vulnerability. The medication's "crash" as effects diminish often left patients feeling fatigued, irritable, or mentally foggy. Some patients adjusted their dosage timing independently to address nighttime binges, but this frequently caused sleep disturbances.

The study underscores the need for understanding lisdexamfetamine's nuanced effects on this patient population. The development of new medications with improved side effect profiles remains a priority for ongoing research.