

Informed Consent for Benzodiazepines for Anxiety Disorders

Uses

I understand that benzodiazepines (drugs like lorazepam or Ativan, diazepam or Valium, clonazepam or Klonopin, alprazolam or Xanax) are sometimes used to lower high levels of anxiety. Some people report improved levels of anxiety when they take these drugs, but I understand that these drugs may not help people with anxiety when taken for more than 12 weeks. There are no studies that have answered this question.

Benefits Expected

- Improved function
- Lower levels of anxiety

Alternatives

I understand that benzodiazepines are not the first choice of treatment for anxiety disorders. There are safer drugs that work better called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), as well as cognitive behavioral therapy (counseling that teaches skills to manage anxiety).

Risks

It has been explained to me and I understand that the use of benzodiazepines can cause:

- Slowed thinking and reaction times, poor focus, confusion, and memory loss
- Less control of my emotions and actions
- Depression
- Weakness
- Falls and fractures (broken bones), especially in the elderly
- Car accidents
- Breathing problems (particularly with lung disease such as Asthma, COPD, or Sleep Apnea)
- Excessive sedation (sleepiness)
- Intoxication
- Tolerance, withdrawal sickness
- Dependence (of the body and mind), substance abuse, and addiction
- Increased risk of all side effects when used with alcohol
- Accidental overdose, especially when taken with certain pain drugs known as opioids
- Higher doses of these drugs cause even greater risks
- These drugs may increase my risk of being the victim of a crime
- These drugs create a greater risk if I have a history of addiction (especially to opioids and alcohol)

I also understand:

- That using alcohol, along with benzodiazepines, is dangerous and that I must not use alcohol while I am taking benzodiazepine drugs.
- That using marijuana, along with benzodiazepines, is dangerous as both may delay my reactions and increase my risk of accident.
- That using opioids, along with benzodiazepines, is dangerous. I should avoid using opioids while I am taking benzodiazepine drugs.
- That all of these risks are especially high in those age 65 and older.

Additional: _____

My provider, _____, and I have tried other more effective and safer treatments such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (counseling), SSRIs, SNRIs, and exercise. I understand the risks described here and I know that by taking benzodiazepine drugs I accept all of these risks. I will continue to work with my providers to explore other safer options to manage my excessive anxiety.

Patient Name: _____

Patient DOB: __/__/____

Patient Signature: _____

Date: __/__/____

Provider Signature: _____

Date: __/__/____