

Study questions benefits of long-term use of ADHD medications

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Credit: Robert Kraft/public domain

In a study that followed more than 500 children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) into adulthood, extended use of stimulant medication was linked with suppressed adult height but not with reduced symptoms of ADHD.

The findings suggest that short-term treatment of ADHD with stimulant medication is well justified by benefits that outweigh costs, but long-term treatment may be associated with growth-related costs that may not be balanced by symptom-related benefits.

"The most recently published guidelines (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2011) recommend expanding the diagnosis and treatment beyond school-aged children and using [stimulant medication](#) as first-line treatment for adolescents as well as school-aged children," wrote the authors of *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* study. "Since this would increase the average duration of treatment and cumulative ME dose of medication in some individuals, the findings suggest growth-related costs may increase."

More information: James M. Swanson et al, Young adult outcomes in the follow-up of the multimodal treatment study of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: symptom persistence, source discrepancy, and height suppression, *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* (2017). [DOI: 10.1111/jcpp.12684](https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12684)

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