

Addiction of Methylphenidate among Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in Lady Ridgeway Hospital for Children (LRH), Sri Lanka

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Methylphenidate is a psychotropic substance used to treat children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Literature reports that there is a great potential for methylphenidate to be abused among 10-14 years of children. Therefore, this study aimed to assess the addiction to methylphenidate among children with ADHD who are treated at Lady Ridgeway Hospital, Sri Lanka. A cross-sectional study was conducted using 96 participants. Guardians of 7-12 years of children with a diagnosis of combined type ADHD who were treated with methylphenidate for at least 12 months previously were included following convenience sampling. An interview-based questionnaire was used to collect data after the ethical approval. Descriptive analysis, ANOVA and the Pearson correlation test were used to analyse data. According to the drug addiction screening test, the majority of the population (51%) showed a moderate level of addiction to methylphenidate. Male children diagnosed with ADHD were 67.7% while female children were 32.3%. A statistically significant positive correlation was observed between an increase in the initial dose and drug addiction ($r=0.289$, $p=0.004$). These findings reveal that with the increase in the dose, there is a greater propensity for an addiction to be present. Further, a child requesting a higher frequency of the dose shows a positive statistically significant association ($r=0.426$, $p=0.000$). This study concluded that there is a possibility of addiction to methylphenidate among children with ADHD. Further investigations on methylphenidate abuse are recommended. All participants in therapy and their guardians need to be educated about the abuse potential of methylphenidate.

Keywords: methylphenidate, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, children, addiction