

RESOLVING THE ADHD MEDICATION SHORTAGE CRISIS USING MARKET BASED SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the causes, implications and solutions for the Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) medication shortage crisis. General physicians, psychiatrists, neurologists, nurse practitioners and other health care professionals prescribe stimulants to substantially eliminate symptoms of ADHD. The use of stimulants has been creeping up among the US population for the last several decades. There has been a sharp increase of prescriptive stimulants since the onset of Covid-19 pandemic. The supply of name brand stimulants (Adderall, Vyvanse, Concerta, Ritalin, Foclin etc.) as well as their generic counterparts (Amphetamines, Lisdexamfetamine, Methylphenidate and others) did not keep pace with the demand. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the government agencies, have classified these prescriptive stimulants as Schedule II controlled substances and have strict mechanisms to allocate production quotas to different pharmaceuticals, inspection of manufacturing processes, and distribution of these controlled substances. The demand was beyond expectations that resulted in misallocation of quotas, unavailability of raw materials, contamination in production process, and other supply chain issues contributed to the shortage of these medicines. The extended periods without the medicines negatively affect patients' learning, behavioral, physical, and mental wellbeing. Market based supply solutions should be implemented by DEA to alleviate suffering caused by unavailability of ADHD medicines.

Keywords: ADHD, DEA/FDA, Stimulants, Adderall, Vyvanse, Concerta, Ritalin, Foclin, Amphetamines, Lisdexamfetamine, Methylphenidate.

1.INTRODUCTION

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity that are pervasive in different aspect of mental tasks, impairing the mind in multiple situations. ADHD exhibits itself into three primary results:

- (i) Primarily inattentive (ADHD-PI or ADHD-I)
- (ii) Primarily hyperactive-impulsive (ADHD-PH or ADHD-HI)
- (iii) combined type (ADHD-C)

If ADHD is not treated, it manifests as lack of focus or diminished concentration or absence of undivided attention on the task at hand. It negatively affects human mental skills of time management and organizing tasks. These mental skills determine success or failure in all aspects of life: Education, Finances, Physical, Behavioral, and Psychological. The lack of concentration may lead to difficulty in learning new skills and accomplishing tasks. For young people, this manifests in declining attainment in education leading to higher drop-out rates. Lack of organizational and time management skills will negatively impact the job performance and may result in job loss or higher unemployment periods. This financial distress due to lower income attainment also leads to fractured relationships and greater incidences of divorces. Inattention gives rise to higher rates of unintended accidents and injuries. To escape reality, the person is