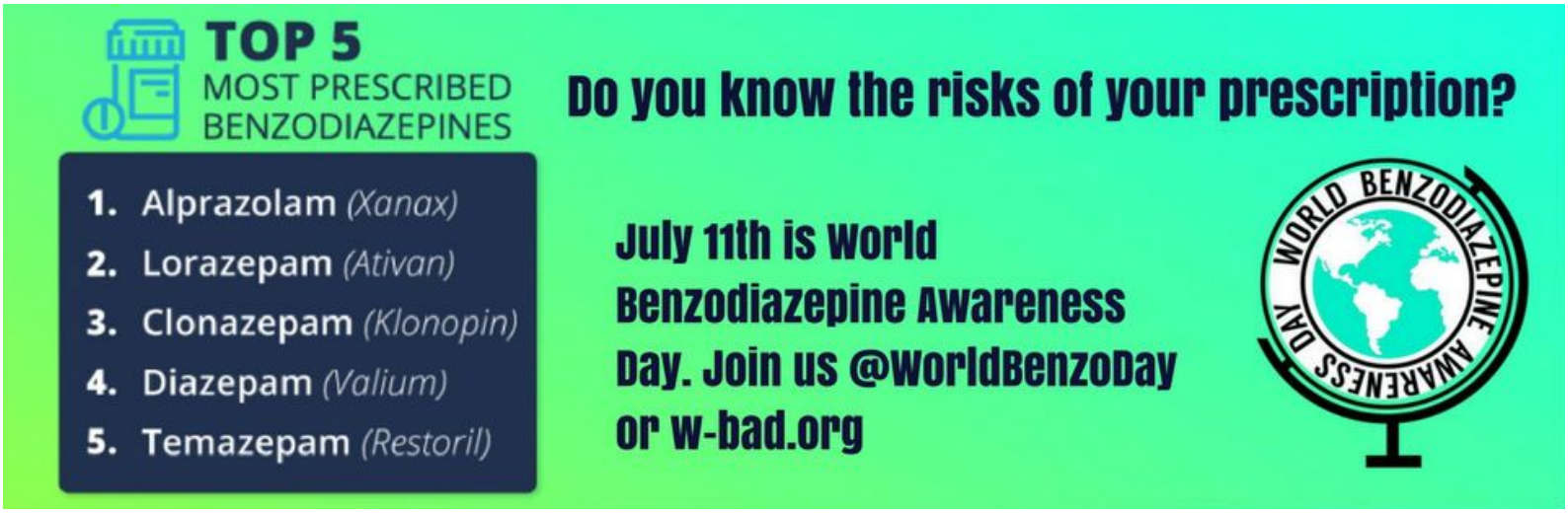

ARE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU LOVE TAKING A BENZODIAZEPINE OR Z DRUG?

Know what you are taking

What is a benzodiazepine? They are tranquilizers known as Ativan (lorazepam), Xanax (alprazolam), Klonopin (clonazepam), Valium (diazepam), etc. The Z drugs are Ambien (zolpidem) or Lunesta (zoplicone)

WHAT'S THE ISSUE? **For over 50 years, doctors have been prescribing benzodiazepines. They are commonly thought of as safe and are routinely prescribed for anxiety, stress, sleep, alcohol withdrawal, and seizure disorders. Far from safe, studies have shown that an estimated 30% of people prescribed a benzodiazepine will experience a severe withdrawal syndrome and/or adverse effects from the drugs. Studies detailing these effects have been downplayed and covered up by drug companies.**

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? **The big problem is the lack of public awareness of the danger of prolonged use of these powerful drugs. Many voices in psychopharmacology and even the manufacturers themselves recommend that prescriptions be limited to 2-4 weeks and warn of the physical dependency that frequently develops often resulting in severe withdrawal symptoms when patients discontinue use. Despite recommendations and warnings, medical providers often prescribe these drugs repeatedly for prolonged periods without giving proper informed consent regarding the risks or appropriate advice on withdrawal protocols. The results are heart-breaking. These patients are not drug abusers and have taken these medications as prescribed by their physicians, the majority of whom are unaware or unconvinced of the hazards posed by dependency and withdrawal.**

The number of people harmed by these drugs around the world is at epidemic levels, yet opioid addiction and abuse gets much more media coverage. Although the benzodiazepine epidemic results in fewer overdose deaths, the suicide rate is shocking. Many people experiencing long-term benzodiazepine withdrawal syndrome have symptoms so devastating and life-destroying that they are driven to take their own lives. People in benzodiazepine withdrawal are the hidden sufferers – without recognition, support or understanding of their suffering.

WHAT CAN YOU DO? **July 11th is designated at World Benzodiazepine Awareness Day. But every day we need to educate ourselves and the professionals. To learn more go to www.w-bad.org**

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