



Psychotropic Medication Use Among Children and Adolescents With a History of Maltreatment

In most Western countries, the use of psychotropic medications among children and adolescents is steadily increasing, with rates of pharmacoprescription having almost reached those observed among adults. Psychostimulants, antidepressants and atypical antipsychotics are the most commonly used drugs. There are slightly more boys than girls among youth who are being medicated and, over the years, their average age tends to decrease. Several surveys have shown that youth who have experienced abuse are particularly likely to be prescribed such medications, especially if the abuse has been reported or if they have been placed in out-of-home care. According to Connor (2002), two rationales for the use of medication have evolved: a diagnostic approach has been replaced by a target symptom approach (e.g., anger, agitation or sleep disturbance).

Most guidelines advocate "rational" or "optimal" use of drug therapy. However, questions remain: what is the place of psychotropic medications in society nowadays? In the work of multidisciplinary teams involved with youth? And how do children and adolescents perceive the medications they are being prescribed?

In this presentation, after having conducted various studies on the use of psychotropic medications, from the point of view of prescribers, non-physician professionals, and children and adolescents themselves, we will present some results and propose some thoughts.

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The logo for the 2023 Trauma Symposium features a stylized orange and grey graphic consisting of overlapping circles and lines, resembling a brain or a network of connections.