

Benzodiazepine Use Associated with Injury Long After Stopping

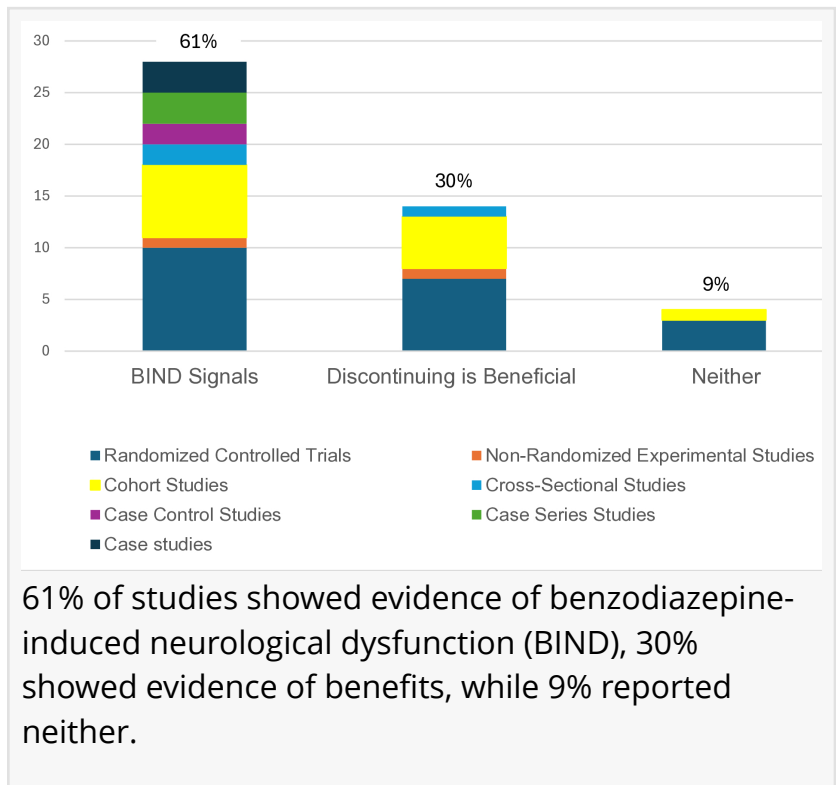
Benzodiazepine use and discontinuation is associated with new nervous system symptoms that continue long after discontinuation.

PORTLAND, OR, UNITED STATES, September 2, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- After using benzodiazepines for 30 days or more, patients discontinuing these common medications for anxiety, insomnia and muscle spasms may experience new nervous system symptoms that continue long after discontinuation, according to an [article published 08/28/2025](#) in the open access journal PLoS One.

A [previous study](#) had shown that this injury exists, and unified 14 different medical names for this phenomena under the term "benzodiazepine-induced neurological dysfunction" (BIND). To better characterize the likelihood of developing BIND, medical student Kayla Shade along with Dr. Ritvo from the University of Colorado and colleagues from Vanderbilt and Yale and three benzodiazepine patient support groups searched the benzodiazepine literature and analyzed 11,446 publications. Forty-six of these concerned patients who had used benzodiazepines for a month or more and documented outcomes a month or more after stopping benzodiazepines. Sixty-one percent reported increased neurological symptoms, while 30% reported only positive outcomes.

Some overlap occurred in the outcomes, but the two groupings of studies suggest that the benefits of benzodiazepine discontinuation for some patients tended to obscure the more prolonged, severe, and sometimes debilitating symptoms that persisted for months and years in other patients. The prevalence or trajectory of these enduring symptoms could not be determined from these studies. The authors conclude that clinicians and patients must be made aware of the risks of benzodiazepine exposure beyond two to four weeks.

Of the studies retrieved in the search, 41% reported on gold-standard randomized clinical trials.



61% of studies showed evidence of benzodiazepine-induced neurological dysfunction (BIND), 30% showed evidence of benefits, while 9% reported neither.



Benzodiazepines have been widely prescribed for decades, yet this exhaustive literature review presents strong evidence that a subset of patients experience long-term neurological complications.”

Alexis Ritvo, M.D.

The bulk of the literature was published prior to 1996 and there were comparatively few results after 2006. Peter Martin, M.D., one of the co-authors, said, “Benzodiazepines have been in use for over 60 years. The literature disagrees on the sequelae of long-term use. This is the first time this voluminous literature has been sifted through to see what happens after patients discontinue their use of benzodiazepines.”

Four main themes emerged from the 46 studies. Nearly all of the studies described the acute withdrawal phase and many recognized that even after benzodiazepine cessation,

some patients resumed the use of benzodiazepines. Second, there was some evidence that many new and varied symptoms indicative of neurologic dysfunction emerged during the taper or discontinuation that persisted four or more weeks after benzodiazepine cessation. Third, several studies showed beneficial effects attributable to stopping benzodiazepine use four or more weeks post-discontinuation. Finally, protracted withdrawal did not affect all persons, but there was no clear evidence of potential risk or protective factors for protracted symptoms following benzodiazepine discontinuation.

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