

suggests a shift in emphasis from the specific psychological and physiological issue of the benzodiazepine effects towards a more global measurement of functioning and behaviour, a measure of the quality of life with or without benzodiazepines. I wonder if this represents a counsel of perfection in an imperfect world.

The review is brief, readable and written in non-technical language. It has a balanced and informative style.

Apart from providing an up-to-date statement of the state of the literature on these complex issues, the paper offers several pointers to gaps in our knowledge and highlights areas that require future research. This would therefore be a useful paper to read for those looking for ideas in planning research projects.

Shortcomings of the review include a disappointment that although the opening paragraph hints at the opportunity of a cost benefit analysis of benzodiazepine use, there seems at present to be little infor-

mation available to allow this evaluation to take place. Nor is the issue that there may be substantial differences between daytime anxiolytics and nighttime hypnotics explored. The fact that benzodiazepines remain the most effective pharmacological treatment for established anxiety symptoms is also glossed over. This is important if one is to see the situation in true context.

This review would be of interest to workers in the expanding 'tranx industry', those involved in self-help groups, litigation and journalists. It is of particular value to those who may not have full access to the voluminous literature developing in this field. It would also be of interest to psychiatrists to position themselves in the spectrum of opinion that surrounds the tranquilliser debate.

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Miscellany

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