Benzodiazepine Awareness in Insomnia Treatment

- Benzodiazepines such as Xanax (alprazolam), Klonopin (clonazepam), Valium (diazepam), and Ativan (lorazepam) are commonly used for insomnia.
- Many medical organizations now recommend against using benzos for insomnia due to their adverse effects (especially in the elderly) and high abuse potential.

  - The American Geriatrics Society; The American Academy of Sleep Medicine; The American Academy of Family Physicians

- Some of the adverse effects of benzodiazepines include memory impairment, irritation/agitation, central nervous system depression, addiction, and withdrawal symptoms (increased heart rate and blood pressure, tremors, sweating, insomnia).

- The recommended first-line treatments for insomnia include stimulus control, relaxation training, and cognitive behavioral therapy.

- Nonbenzodiazepine medications with less addictive potential such as melatonin, ramelteon, zolpidem (Ambien), eszopiclone, zaleplon, and doxepin are also available as SHORT-TERM treatments for insomnia.

- Talk to your doctor about alternative treatments for insomnia.

References:

Craske, Michelle, PhD; “Approach to treating generalized anxiety disorder in adults;” UpToDate

Locke, Amy B., MD; “Diagnosis and Management of Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Panic Disorder in Adults;” Am Fam Physician. 2015 May 1;91(9):617-624
