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Greater Risk of Accidents in Young Adult Drivers with ADHD

Treatment with Medication May Significantly Improve Driving Safety Performance

WASHINGTON, August 1, 2006 /PRNewswire/ -- A pilot study conducted by researchers at the Washington Neuropsychological Institute found that a small group of young adults (n=14) with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) improved their driving safety performance when treated with once-daily Adderall XR(R), a leading ADHD medication. This study suggests the importance of effectively treating ADHD symptoms, as untreated ADHD compromises road safety by impairing an individual's ability to focus.

"Many teenage and young adult drivers with ADHD have trouble complying with the rules of the road and have difficulty staying focused on the complex and demanding task of driving," said Dr. Gary Kay, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Neurology at Georgetown University School of Medicine and Director of the Washington Neuropsychological Institute. "In clinical studies, Adderall XR has been demonstrated to significantly improve ADHD symptoms of inattention and distractibility. This study demonstrated that treatment of ADHD symptoms may lead to improvement of driving safety performance."

Untreated ADHD Symptoms Affect Driving

ADHD affects approximately 8 million adults in the United States. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), automobile accidents are the leading cause of death in teenagers and adults, with motor vehicle crashes accounting for approximately 36 percent of all deaths for people aged 15 to 20. Additionally 45 percent of these fatalities occurred in speed-related crashes.

Research suggests that teenagers with ADHD are nearly four times more likely to be involved in a motor vehicle accident. Further, young adults with ADHD have a significantly higher incidence of traffic violations and license suspensions than patients without ADHD.

"Teenagers and young adults with untreated ADHD are at risk as they drive this summer," said David Giwerc, spokesman and immediate past president for Attention Deficit Disorder Association, a national ADHD advocacy and resource organization. "Drivers with untreated ADHD may pose a serious public health threat, and we advise drivers who have symptoms of ADHD to get evaluated, diagnosed and treated."

Driving Performance May Improve with Treatment of ADHD Symptoms

To evaluate the driving safety performance of a small group of young adults with ADHD taking medication or placebo, Dr. Kay and researchers at the Washington Neuropsychological Institute conducted a pilot study using the STISIM Drive(TM) Simulation System. The research driving simulator assessed participants' driving skills, including situation awareness, hazard perception, risk assessment and decision-making under time pressure.

Researchers used the simulator to determine the participants' Driving Safety Scores by averaging their results on safety-related driving parameters including tickets, crashes and excess speed. The study found that those treated with Adderall XR had better scores than those who did not receive treatment for their ADHD symptoms. While treated, participants were better able to avoid crash-likely events, were less likely to tailgate other drivers, and were more able to maintain their speed and comply with traffic regulations than when they received a placebo.

"The good news is that symptoms of ADHD can be controlled effectively with long-acting stimulant medications, such as Adderall XR, potentially leading to a safer driving experience," noted Dr. Kay.

To learn more about ADHD and driving safety, visit www.DrivingWithADHD.com.

Shire Development Inc. supported this study.

About Washington Neuropsychological Institute

The Washington Neuropsychological Institute) is a private, independent research organization that conducts clinical research trials and provides consulting services to government agencies and to the pharmaceutical industry. At its Northwest Washington, DC, facility, WNI has conducted studies on antihistamines, anticholinergics, memory enhancement drugs, jet lag remedies, head trauma, epilepsy, diabetes, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, and ADHD. WNI is fully equipped to support phase III and phase IV clinical trials. The institute specializes in computer-based neurocognitive testing and driving simulation. In addition, professional staff members are frequent lecturers at national and international medical and scientific meetings. (WNI@mail@aol.com)

About ADHD

ADHD affects approximately 7.8 percent of all school-age children, about 4.4 million U.S. children aged 4 to 17 years, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Up to 80 percent of children with ADHD may continue to experience symptoms into adolescence and up to 65 percent may continue to experience symptoms into adulthood. Approximately eight million American adults currently struggle with the inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity symptoms of ADHD. Without an effective treatment program, ADHD may have serious adverse effects on the lives of those affected. The disorder frequently results in poor performance at school and in the workplace, while social and family relationships also may suffer. Evidence suggests that many with untreated ADHD may be at risk for other problems, including poor performance in the workplace and poor self-image.

ADHD is a neurological behavioral disorder that manifests as a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that is more frequent and severe than typically observed in individuals at a comparable age and maturity level. Because everyone shows signs of these behaviors at times, the behaviors must appear early in life (before age 7) and continue for at least six months, according to the ADHD diagnosis criteria as defined in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR(R)).

Although there is no cure for ADHD, physicians and advocates are finding ways to help people with the condition learn to adapt to their school, home, social and work settings. ADHD usually can be successfully managed with a combination of treatments, such as behavioral therapy, skill building and medication. Medication should be considered part of an overall multi-modal treatment plan for ADHD.

About Adderall XR

Adderall XR was generally well tolerated in clinical studies. The most common side effects in studies included: children -- decreased appetite, difficulty falling asleep, stomachache, and emotional lability; adolescents -- loss of appetite, difficulty falling asleep, stomachache, and weight loss; adults -- dry mouth, loss of appetite, difficulty falling asleep, headache, and weight loss.

Tell your doctor about any heart conditions, including structural abnormalities, that you, your child, or a family member, may have. Adderall XR should not be taken by patients who are currently taking or have recently taken a type of antidepressant called a MAO inhibitor, have a history of high blood pressure, problems with alcohol or drugs, agitated states, or glaucoma. Patients should also tell the doctor if they have seizures, visual disturbances, thyroid problems, abnormal thoughts/behaviors, bipolar disorder, depression, or other mental illness, or a known allergy to this type of medication.

Abuse of amphetamines may lead to dependence. Misuse of amphetamine may cause sudden death and serious cardiovascular adverse events. These events have also been reported rarely with amphetamine use. Aggression, new abnormal thoughts/behaviors, mania, and growth suppression have been associated with use of drugs of this type. There is a potential for worsening of motion or verbal tics and Tourette's syndrome. Report any new psychological symptoms to the doctor and inform the doctor immediately of any symptoms that suggest heart problems, such as chest pain or fainting.

CONTACT: Carolina Chang, Porter Novelli, +1-212-601-8185; Priya Namjoshi, Porter Novelli, +1-212-601-8337

Web site: <http://www.DrivingWithADHD.com/>

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