FDA OKs Popular ADHD Drug for Binge-Eating Disorder

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There are millions of people who eat uncontrollably and then feel overcome by guilt and shame. It's called binge-eating disorder (BED), and last week the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first-ever treatment for adults who suffer from this mental health condition, Reuters reports.

The treatment is a stimulant called Vyvanse that's made by Irish biotech company Shire Plc. Vyvanse is actually already an approved and widely prescribed treatment for patients with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), another mental health condition.

In recent clinical trials, patients who took Vyvanse for BED had significantly fewer binge days per week than those who took a harmless pill, or placebo. In one study, subjects on the stimulant dropped their average number of binge days per week from almost five days to less than one.

Although it's possible patients might drop a few pounds while using this treatment, the FDA stressed that the drug is not approved for weight loss. In addition, researchers also warned that Vyvanse is an amphetamine, which, like other drugs in its class, can carry the potential for abuse and addiction.

Notable side effects of Vyvanse included an increase in blood pressure and heart rate, as well as an increased risk of heart attack, stroke and sudden death. Researchers also reported psychiatric side effects such as mania, insomnia and hallucinations.

For more information about binge-eating disorder, click here.

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