

August 13-14, 2018  
Madrid, Spain

**Background:** Benzodiazepines (benzos) are a group of drugs used mainly as sedatives, hypnotics, anti-epileptics and muscle relaxants. Highly effective for short term treatment, benzodiazepines and Z drugs are not recommended for use beyond 2 to 4 weeks, as they carry a high risk of tolerance, dependency, accidents and morbidity, including increased risks of dementia. Patients who do withdraw successfully report significant improvements in health and wellbeing; however for some users the withdrawal process can be difficult and protracted.

**Objectives:** To understand patient experiences of benzodiazepine discontinuation syndrome from the user perspective.

**Design:** Qualitative study of online patient narratives of benzodiazepine discontinuation and recovery, with thematic analysis.

**Setting:** Online study of data gathered from open access electronic support groups (ESGs), Internet blogs and YouTube videos on benzodiazepine withdrawal (discontinuation) syndrome.

**Results:** Online study of data gathered from open access electronic support groups (ESGs), Internet blogs and YouTube videos on benzodiazepine withdrawal (discontinuation) syndrome.