The written media are important for disseminating information about drugs. Unlike information relating to other fields of research, however, information about drugs has many different written sources (research and medical journals, rules and regulations, magazines and lay media, etc.). Benzodiazepines are the most-prescribed drugs worldwide because of their effects on anxiety and insomnia. However, in some circumstances they can be associated with amnesic episodes. Almost 20 years has elapsed between when these effects were discovered and when general practitioners and users were told about them. This presentation highlights the history and logic of the discovery of the amnesic effect of benzodiazepines, and how information about it was relayed in different media, from research journals to the medical and lay media. I demonstrate why physicians remained in the dark for such a long time, and how a beneficial effect became an undesirable effect, partly due to media coverage.

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