## Methods of Modifying Behaviour – Beta Blockers (Evaluation)

### Ethical Implications

#### Side Effects

- Mild to temporary
- May experience; dizziness
- Diarrhoea
- Nausea
- Blurred vision
- Cold hands and feet

Beta-blockers may cause issues with sleep and shortness of breath in asthmatics but overall compared with other anti-anxiety drugs (i.e. BZ's) the effects are minimal.

However, stopping taking them suddenly could cause problems such as heart palpitation or rise in blood pressure as the body will have become used to the effects of the drug slowing down the sympathetic response.

May become too psychologically dependent on drugs (feel as though the cannot cope without them)

### Social Implications

**The Impact Of Prescribing Drugs Off-Label**

Beta-Blockers are prescribed off label as they have not been licensed to be used in this way. This means that well-controlled long-term research into the effects of drug use is likely to be limited.

- Lin (2006) reported the proportion of off-label beta-blocker use was on average about 52% of beta blockers prescriptions
- The use of drugs in this way creates a dilemma for health professionals
- Christopher (2012) note that there are issues with lawsuits against doctors and companies should there be any adverse effects
- There may be issues of valid consent if the off-label use is not explained to people using them

### Possible Over Prescription

Statistics form Prescribing and Primary Care Health and Social Care Information Centre (2014) indicate prescriptions of beta-blockers (propranolol) rose by 7% between 2012 and 2013.

Although this may be due to increased use of heart problems, some professionals have expressed concern that they are being overprescribed for treating stress - Anxiety is becoming a bigger issue in society and treatments are limited.

Especially psychological therapies are more expensive and therefore prescribing beta blockers may be a more cost-effective option, however, this is unlikely to deal with the root cause of stress that is being experienced.

## Conclusion

Overall, beta blockers are ethical in dealing with with it stress-related symptoms, but the prescription use needs to be more controlled and only be used for those who have severe anxiety problems. Mild to Moderate may better benefit from therapy to help deal with the root cause.