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SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

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What is depression?

Depression is characterised by a depressed mood and/or a loss of interest or pleasure in activities. Symptoms of depression include changes in appetite, weight, sleep, and psychomotor activity, decreased energy, blunted affect, social withdrawal, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness and guilt, and thoughts of suicide. As many symptoms are common to both depression and the negative syndrome of schizophrenia it can be difficult to identify a comorbid depressive illness in people with schizophrenia. Identifying and treating a comorbid depressive illness may increase the likelihood of recovery from psychosis and reduce the likelihood of psychotic relapse.

What is the evidence for pharmaceutical treatments for depression in people with schizophrenia?

For adjunctive antidepressants compared to placebo or no adjunctive treatment, moderate quality evidence finds a small effect of greater improvement in depressive symptoms with adjunctive antidepressants.

For antipsychotics alone compared to placebo, moderate to high quality evidence finds a large effect of greater improvement in depressive symptoms with sulpiride. There were medium-sized improvements with clozapine, amisulpride, and aripiprazole over placebo. There were small improvements with olanzapine, cariprazine, paliperidone, asenapine, quetiapine, risperidone, ziprasidone, lurasidone, haloperidol, and brexpiprazole. There were no improvements over placebo with clopenthixol, sertindole, flupentixol, chlorpromazine, perphenazine, zotepine, zuclopenthixol, thiotixene, loxapine, penfluridol, pimozide, perazine, trifluoperazine, molindone, or levomepromazine.

Moderate to low quality evidence suggests the antipsychotic clozapine may improve depression symptoms more than any other antipsychotic combined with the antidepressants amitriptyline, mianserin, meclobemide or placebo.

For more information see the technical table



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NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.

Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.

Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.

While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about schizophrenia or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia.