

ANTIDEPRESSANT DRUG TREATMENTS

Extracted: Resource book - www.spheregp.com.au

Direct **benefits** of drugs on target symptoms

Patient symptoms	SSRIs (Zoloft, Aropax, Prozac)	SNRIs (Efexor)	RIMAs (Aurorix)	TCA's (Prothiaden, Tryptanol)	NaSSAs (Avanza, Remeron)	NARIs (Edronax)
Depressed mood	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Insomnia	-	-	-	✓✓	✓✓✓	-
Nervousness/anxiety 'stress'	✓	✓	-	✓✓	✓✓	-
Tiredness/fatigue	-	-	✓✓	-	-	✓
Headaches	-	-	-	✓✓	✓	-
Muscle aches/pains	-	-	-	✓✓	-	-
Panic attacks	✓✓	✓	-	✓	-	-
Obsessive compulsive symptoms	✓✓	✓	-	✓✓ (Anafranil only)	-	-

✓ - mild benefits, ✓✓ - moderate benefits, ✓✓✓ - most benefits

- N.B. 1. When the symptoms described are directly due to major depression, then all are likely to improve following 4 to 6 weeks of effective therapy. For example, although SSRIs commonly make sleep disturbance/insomnia worse initially, they are associated with improved sleep 4 to 6 weeks later.
2. TCAs are commonly prescribed for their wide range of non-specific benefits but are also the most toxic compounds available.
3. All of these drugs have been shown to be effective antidepressant agents. These columns demonstrate their relative efficacy as judged by clinical psychiatrists.

Possible **side-effects** when starting on antidepressant drugs

Patient symptoms	SSRIs (Zoloft, Aropax, Prozac)	SNRIs (Efexor)	RIMAs (Aurorix)	TCA's (Prothiaden, Tryptanol)	NaSSAs (Avanza, Remeron)	NARIs (Edronax)
Insomnia	✗	✗	✗	-	-	✗✗✗
Agitation	✗	✗	✗	-	-	✗✗
Sedation/sleepiness	-	✗	-	✗✗	✗✗	-
Nausea	✗	✗✗	-	-	-	-
Headaches	✗	✗✗	-	-	-	✗✗
Sexual dysfunction	✗✗	✗✗	-	✗	-	-
Drug interactions	✗	-	✗	✗✗	-	-
High blood pressure	-	✗	-	-	-	✗
Low blood pressure/giddiness	✗	✗	-	✗✗✗	✗	✗✗
Anticholinergic (blurred vision, dry mouth, constipation, urinary difficulties, glaucoma)	-	-	-	✗✗	-	✗ (dry mouth/ constipation, urinary difficulties)
Weight gain	-	-	-	✗✗	✗✗	-
Sweating	-	✗	-	-	-	✗✗

✗ - mild side-effects, ✗✗ - moderate side-effects, ✗✗✗ - severe side-effects

- N.B. 1. Patients should be adequately informed about common side-effects to increase initial compliance with their medication.
2. Many of these side-effects only occur shortly after starting the drug. Only a minority of patients have to stop these drugs due to side-effects.

It may be helpful to keep a record of the benefits and side-effects of treatment to help you and your doctor assess the effectiveness of your treatment.