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Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

Volume 1, Issue 2, September 2007, Pages 23-27

Comparing the efficacy of add-on nortriptyline with triiodothyronine in the management of citalopram-resistant depression

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Abstract

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Objective: To manage a treatment resistant depression, clinicians may add a second medication to the first antidepressant drug. The aim of the current research was to study the outcome of augmentation of citalopram with nortriptyline or triiodothyronine in a randomized clinical trial. **Methods:** We selected 48 adult outpatients with a diagnosis of non-psychotic major depressive disorder who had not responded to 12 weeks citalopram therapy (40 mg per day). They were randomly allocated to two groups. One group received nortriptyline (at a dose of up to 150 mg per day) and the other triiodothyronine (T3) (at a dose of up to 50 µg per day). The remission of depression was defined as a score of 7 or less on the 17-item Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (HRSD-17). **Results:** After 8 weeks, the nortriptyline group had a higher remission rate (33.33 %) than the triiodothyronine group (17.64%). The nortriptyline group, however, had a higher dropout rate due to experiencing more side effects. **Conclusion:** Augmentation of citalopram with nortriptyline seems to be effective in the management of treatment resistant depression. However, one should strike a balance between the efficacy and the tolerability of this approach, as there is a higher chance of experiencing side effects by the patients.

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Author keywords

Citalopram; Depression; Nortriptyline; Triiodothyronine

ISSN: 17358639 Source Type: Journal Original language: English

Document Type: Article

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