

# Treatment Resistant Depression

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# What is Depression?

- **Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) is a condition diagnosed by a patient with a history of at least one major depressive episode**
- **A major depressive episode has to last at least 2 consecutive weeks, and consists of various symptoms which include:**
  - **depressed mood**
  - **anhedonia (reduced or inability to experience pleasure)**
  - **insomnia or hypersomnia**
  - **change in appetite or weight**
  - **psychomotor retardation or agitation**
  - **low energy**
  - **poor concentration**
  - **thoughts of worthlessness or guilt, and recurrent thoughts about death or suicide**

# Depression in Other Psychiatric Conditions

- Depression is usually thought to only exist within the context of Major Depressive Disorder, but depression and depressive episodes also show up in other psychiatric conditions, including:
  - Bipolar I and II Disorder (depression seen here is known as Bipolar Depression)
  - Borderline Personality Disorder
  - Schizophrenia
  - Adjustment Disorder
  - Substance Use Disorder

## How is Depression Measured?

- When initially evaluating for depression or when following up with a patient with Major Depressive Disorder, the way physicians can measure the severity of depression is with validated self-report symptom scales. The two most commonly used are:
  - Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)
  - Beck Depression Inventory

## Treatment options for Major Depressive Disorder

- Medication first-line treatment options for patients with MDD usually consists of SSRIs, SNRIs, atypical antidepressants, and serotonin modulators
- Psychotherapy is also an option for first-line treatment of MDD. Therapy can be done alone, or in combination with medication.

# First-line Medications for Major Depressive Disorder

## SSRIs & SNRIs

### SSRIs

- Citalopram
- Escitalopram
- Fluoxetine
- Fluvoxamine
- Paroxetine
- Sertraline

### SNRIs

- Duloxetine
- Venlafaxine

## Atypical Antidepressants

- Bupropion
- Mirtazapine

## Serotonin Modulators

- Trazodone
- Vilazodone

# What is Treatment Resistant Depression?

- Treatment Resistant Depression usually refers to major depressive episodes that do not respond well after at least 2 trials of antidepressant medications at sufficient doses for sufficient duration
- Risk factors for Treatment Resistant Depression include:
  - Male sex
  - Early age of onset of major depression
  - Loss of employment and low socioeconomic status
  - Recurrent depressive episodes
  - Patients with other comorbidities (ex: coronary heart disease, hypothyroidism, chronic pain)

# Approaches For Treatment Resistant Depression

- Medication Augmentation
- Ketamine, esketamine
- Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS)
- Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)

## Medication Augmentation

- Medication augmentation means to add an additional medication to an already existing treatment regimen. This can be helpful in treatment resistant depression when first-line antidepressants are not working well.
- Some medications used for augmentation in treatment resistant depression include: second-generation antipsychotics, lithium, another antidepressants, lisdexamfetamine

## Ketamine, Esketamine

- Esketamine (Spravato) is specifically indicated for patients with treatment resistant depression. It is self-administered intranasally at specific treatment centers.
- Ketamine is a general anesthetic that is often administered intravenously over 40 minutes, two times/week for two to four weeks

## Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS)

- TMS is also indicated specifically for treatment resistant depression. The device uses an alternating electrical current passed through a metal coil placed against the scalp to generate rapidly alternating magnetic fields
- repetitive TMS is usually administered by stimulating the brain (Monday through Friday) over four to six weeks

## Electroconvulsive Therapy

- Typically used as a last-resort for treatment resistant depression, but considered very effective. The procedure uses a small electric current to produce a controlled generalized cerebral seizure under general anesthesia.
- Also used for patients with other conditions, including bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, catatonia, and neuroleptic malignant syndrome

## Takeaways

- **Treatment resistant depression does not mean one's depression is untreatable. There are still many management options that can be used for these patients**
- **Depression measurement with self-report symptom scales is very important. Measuring how depression changes over time is what will help to direct treatment**
- **Be open and honest with your doctor about your symptoms, progress, and questions. Clear communication between patient and doctor helps to create a much more specific and unique treatment plan for each patient.**

# References

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