

Table 1: Comparison of antidepressants used in the elderly

Class	Generic (brand)	Maintenance dose (mg)	Indication	Adverse effects
TCAs	Amitriptyline (Lentizol, Tryptizol)	50-150	Depression where sedation required	Sedation, postural hypotension, falls, antimuscarinic and cardiac effects
	Lofepamine (Gamanil)	140-210	Depression without sedation	Relatively free of above effects; may cause hepatic damage
SSRIs	Fluoxetine (Prozac)	20	Depression	Anxiety, headache, gastrointestinal disturbance
	Paroxetine (Seroxat)	20-40	Depression, panic disorder	As fluoxetine, plus sedation, withdrawal syndrome
	Citalopram (Cipramil)	20-40	Depression, panic	As fluoxetine plus sedation disorder
	Sertraline (Lustral)	50-150	Depression	As fluoxetine plus sedation
	Fluvoxamine (Faverin)	100-300	Depression	As fluoxetine; gastrointestinal disturbance pronounced
	Nefazodone (Dutonin)	200-400	Depression	Nausea, dizziness, sedation
MAOIs	Phenelzine (Nardil), isocarboxazid (Marplan), tranylcypromine (Parnate)	10-20	Depression with 'atypical' features and/or phobias	Hypertensive crisis, postural hypotension, sedation, agitation
RIMA	Moclobemide (Manerix)	150-600	Major depression	Agitation, nausea, dizziness
SNRI	Venlafaxine (Efexor)	75-150	Depression	Nausea, agitation, sedation, headache, postural hypotension
NASSA	Mirtazapine (Zispin)	15-45	Depression	Sedation, weight gain

TCA = tricyclic; SSRI = specific serotonin reuptake inhibitor; MAOI = monoamine oxidase inhibitor; RIMA = inhibitor of monoamine-A; SNRI = serotonin and noradrenaline reuptake inhibitor; NASSA = noradrenaline and selective serotonin antidepressant

considered for long-term and possibly indefinite prophylaxis⁵. For those patients without contraindications, lithium may be used to augment the antidepressant, and this combination has been shown to both tolerable and effective¹².

Lastly, it should be borne in mind that antidepressant medication, while often effective in itself, may be augmented by appropriate psychosocial treatments ranging from cognitive-behavioural therapy to practical interventions such as the provision of home help.

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