

Antidepressant use associated with increased mortality among critically ill patients?

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Researchers at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, in Boston, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, have found that critically ill patients were more likely to die if they were taking the most commonly prescribed antidepressants when they were admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU).

The researchers conducted a [retrospective study](#) using the [electronic medical records](#) of 10,568 patients to look at in-hospital mortality and mortality a year after being admitted to the ICU.

"We found that mortality was higher overall for patients taking antidepressants prior to admission to the ICU and remained significantly higher a year later," said Katherine. M. Berg, MD, one of the physicians involved in the study. "We also found that certain subgroups of patients, particularly patients admitted for [cardiac problems](#), appeared to be at even greater risk."

The study results will be presented at the ATS 2012 International Conference in San Francisco.

Of the 10,568 patient records studied, 1,876 patients were taking either a [selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor](#) (SSRI) or a serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor (SNRI) prior to admission to an ICU. They were compared to patients admitted to an ICU who were not on one of these medications. After adjusting for age, gender, ICD-9 diagnosis, [disease severity](#) and co-morbidities, the researchers found that

patients on SSRI/SNRI's prior to admission to the ICU were 73 percent more likely to die in the hospital (p

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