

# Antidepressant drugs do not improve well-being in children and adolescents

July 7 2014

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In an article published in the current issue of *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* the effects of antidepressant drugs on well-being in children and adolescents are analyzed.

Recent meta-analyses of the efficacy of second-generation [antidepressants](#) for youth have concluded that such drugs possess a statistically significant advantage over placebo in terms of clinician-rated [depressive symptoms](#). However, no meta-analysis has included measures of quality of life, global mental health, [self-esteem](#), or autonomy.

Further, prior meta-analyses have not included self-reports of depressive symptoms. Studies were selected through searching Medline, PsycINFO, and the Cochrane Central Register for Controlled Trials databases as well as GlaxoSmithKline's online trial registry, including self-reports of depressive symptoms and pooled measures of quality of life, global mental health, self-esteem, and autonomous functioning as a proxy for overall well-being.

Result showed a nonsignificant difference between second-generation antidepressants and placebo in terms of self-reported depressive symptoms. Further, pooled across measures of quality of life, global mental health, self-esteem, and autonomy, antidepressants yielded no significant advantage over placebo.

Even though limited by a small number of trials, this analysis suggests that antidepressants offer little to no benefit in improving overall well-

being among depressed children and adolescents.

**More information:** Spielmans GI, Gerwig K. The Efficacy of Antidepressants on Overall Well-Being and Self-Reported Depression Symptom Severity in Youth: A Meta-Analysis. *Psychother Psychosom* 2014;83:158-164 . [DOI: 10.1159/000356191](https://doi.org/10.1159/000356191)

Provided by Journal of Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics

Citation: Antidepressant drugs do not improve well-being in children and adolescents (2014, July 7) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-07-antidepressant-drugs-well-being-children-adolescents.html>

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