

# SSRI antidepressants associated with increase in violent crime in some patients

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Scientists have found that some people being treated with selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) have a greater tendency to commit violent crime. In addition, this effect seems to continue for up to 12 weeks after stopping SSRI treatment. This work is published in the peer-reviewed journal *European Neuropsychopharmacology*, alongside a linked comment. The authors of both the paper and the comment note that the work indicates an association (rather than cause and effect), and urge caution in how the findings are interpreted.

First author Tyra Lagerberg at the Department of Medical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, said, "This work shows that SSRI ([selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor](#)) treatment appears to be associated with an [increased risk](#) for violent criminality in adults as well as adolescents, though the risk appears restricted to a small group of individuals. We don't claim that SSRIs cause the increased risk we see in our data. It is possible that the disorders that SSRIs are prescribed to treat, such as depression, are driving the association. In that case, our findings may mean that SSRIs are unable to fully remove this tendency toward violent [crime](#), which is also a potentially important insight. Previous work has found an association between SSRI use and violence in [young individuals](#), but not in adults. Ours is a much bigger study which allows us to confirm that there is an association in adults, as well."

The researchers examined the records of 785,337 people aged 15 to 60 years who were prescribed an SSRI in Sweden in 2006 through 2013.

These patients were followed up for an average of around seven years, which included periods when individuals took SSRIs and when they did not. Individuals in the study were found to have committed 6,306 violent crimes while taking SSRIs, and 25,897 when not taking SSRIs.

After accounting for follow-up time and variables that were associated both with the probability of getting SSRI treatment and with the risk for violence, the researchers found that the risk of committing a violent crime was on average 26% higher during periods when individuals took SSRIs compared to periods when they did not, though only a small proportion of individuals went on to commit violent crimes regardless of treatment (

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