

Do antidepressants lead to chronic use?

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Data from Netherlands point to the chronic use of antidepressant drugs in general practice in a study published in the current issue of *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*. Antidepressant use is highly prevalent. Research has mainly focused on efficacy during short periods of use for depression and anxiety. There is a relative paucity of data regarding the frequency of long-term use.

To determine the prevalence and possible increase of long-term use of antidepressants over recent years, Authors analyzed routine [general practice](#) care data in a large cohort of patients (n = 156,620) in and around Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Results highlighted a substantial prevalence of long-term use of antidepressants. In addition, such use appears to be increasing: 30.3% of use was long-term over the period 1995-2005 compared to 43.7% for the period 2005-2015. Higher age, a registered diagnosis of [anxiety](#) or depression, and the use of SSRIs or SNRIs were associated with long-term use of [antidepressant drugs](#). Furthermore, specific antidepressants were differentially associated with long-term use.

Authors concluded that long-term antidepressant use is substantial and appears to be on the rise. Awareness of this phenomenon should be increased, such use should be prevented when possible, and reasons for long-term use need to be examined.

More information: Klaas M. Huijbregts et al. Long-Term and Short-Term Antidepressant Use in General Practice: Data from a Large Cohort in the Netherlands, *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* (2017). [DOI: 10.1159/000480456](https://doi.org/10.1159/000480456)

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