
EFFECTS OF ANTIDEPRESSANTS ON SLEEP ARCHITECTURE

P. Kundi¹, M. Divakar²

¹Adult Psychiatry, Broadoak Unit Broadgreen Hospital, Liverpool, United Kingdom ; ²Adult Psychiatry, Moss House CMHT, Liverpool, United Kingdom

Introduction: Sleep disturbances are an integral part of the biological syndrome of depression and relief from this is often essential to enhance compliance with medications and psychological treatments. Anti-depressants, which are the mainstay of treatment of depressive illnesses, have varying effects on our sleep architecture. It is important for researchers and clinicians to be aware of these effects.

Objectives: We looked at the available literature on how antidepressants affect sleep patterns and tried to synthesize the findings in this poster.

Aims: The primary aim of our effort was to look at how antidepressants alter our sleeping behaviour and how they affect the different stages of sleep.

Methods: We tried to look at the available literature and product summary sheets of various antidepressants and have attempted to summarize how they alter our sleep architecture.

Results: SSRIs and TCAs have marked dose-dependent effects on REM sleep in both healthy volunteers and depressed patients, with increased REM-onset latency and decreased REM sleep. Other antidepressants have modest or minimal effects on REM sleep. The effects on sleep are most likely mediated by 5-HT₁ receptors.

Conclusions: Most antidepressants affect sleep and the physiological patterns of different sleep stages. These effects are greatest and most consistent on rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, and tend to be in the opposite direction to the sleep abnormalities found in depression.