

Exercise as antidepressant treatment

*Progress,
challenges
and
prospects*

Panteleimon Ekkekakis, Ph.D., FACSM

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY



Evidence-Based Practice Pathway

Where are we now?

①

Convincing evidence of efficacy and effectiveness

②

Evidence-based clinical practice / public health guidelines

③

Large-scale implementation



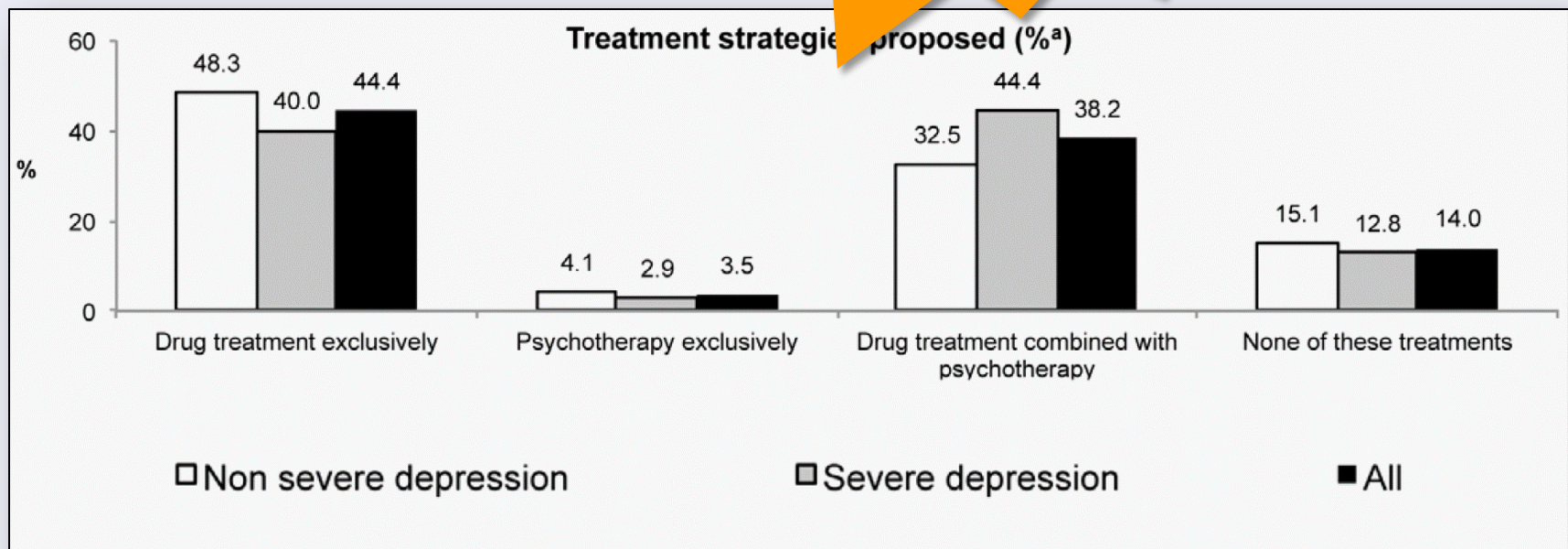


**Convincing
evidence of
efficacy and
effectiveness**

General Practitioners' Choices and Their Determinants When Starting Treatment for Major Depression: A Cross Sectional, Randomized Case-Vignette Survey

Hélène Dumesnil^{1,2,3}, Sébastien Cortaredona^{1,2,3}, Hélène^{4,5}
Alain Paraponaris^{1,2,3}, Pierre Verger^{1,2,3*}

**Antidepressants
prescribed in 80.8%
of cases of mild &
moderate depression**



Treatment preferences in patients with first episode depression

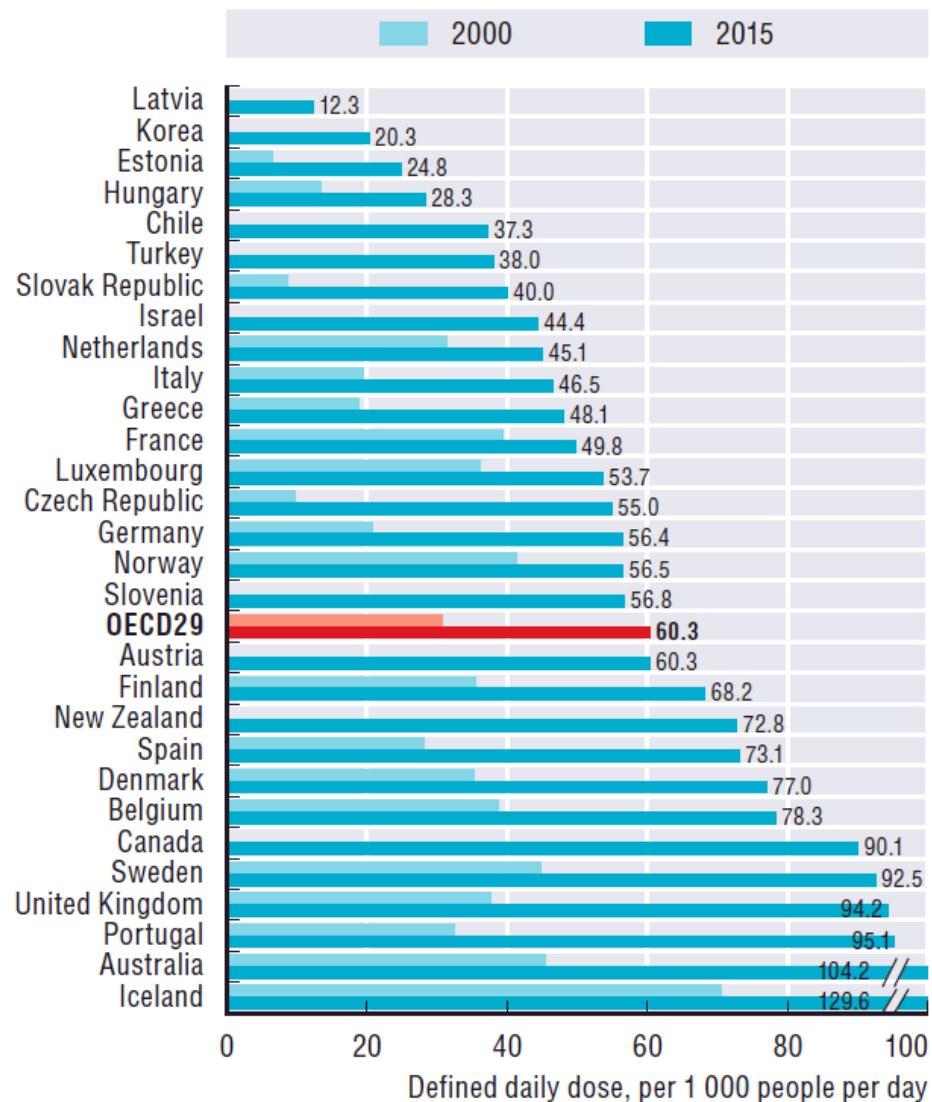
Janie Houle^{a,*}, Benjamin Villaggi^a, Marie-Dominique Beaulieu^b, Francois Lespérance^c, Gilles Rondeau^d, Jean Lambert^e

**Antidepressants
prescribed to 91%
of newly diagnosed
patients with first-
episode depression**

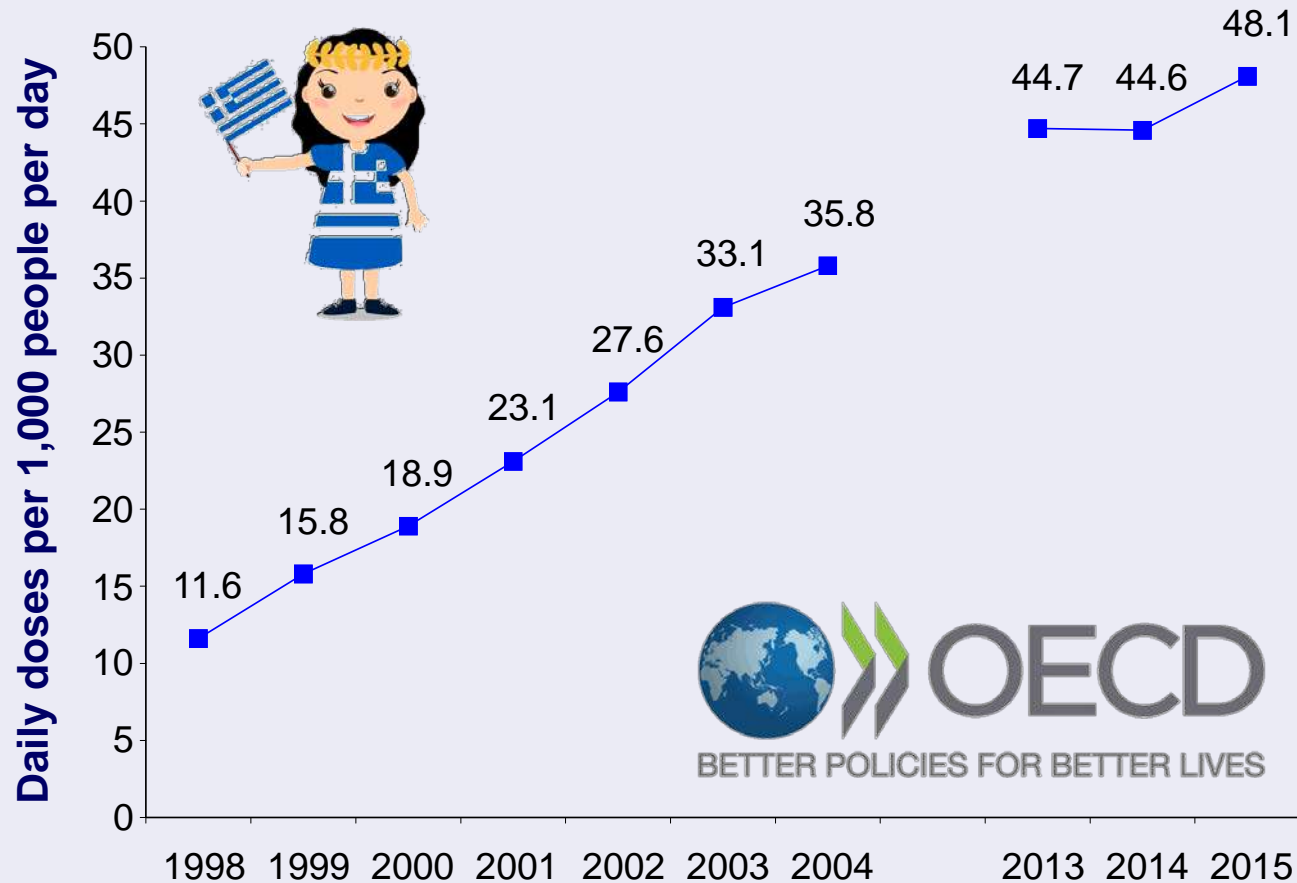
Characteristics	<i>n</i> (%)
Current treatment	
Antidepressants only	50 (56.8)
Psychotherapy only	2 (2.3)
Both treatments	30 (34.1)
None	6 (6.8)



10.9. Antidepressant drugs consumption, 2000 and 2015 (or nearest year)



Antidepressant Consumption in Greece



Effectiveness of antidepressants: an **evidence myth** constructed from a thousand randomized trials?

John PA Ioannidis^{1,2}





For continuous outcomes for which an SMD was calculated (for example, when data from different versions of a scale are combined), an effect size of ~ 0.5 (a 'medium' effect size; Cohen, 1988) or higher was considered clinically significant. Where a WMD was calculated, a between group difference of at least three points (two points for treatment-resistant depression) was considered clinically significant for both BDI and HRSD.

Beck Depression Inventory

1. I do not feel sad.
2. I feel sad.
3. I am sad all the time and can't snap out of it.
4. I am so sad or unhappy that I can't stand it.

1. I am not particularly discouraged about the future.
2. I feel discouraged about the future.
3. I feel I have nothing to look forward to.
4. I feel that the future is hopeless and that things cannot improve.



Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression

1. **DEPRESSED MOOD** (Sadness, hopeless, helpless, worthless)

_____ 0= Absent

1= These feeling states indicated only on questioning

2= These feeling states spontaneously reported verbally

3= Communicates feeling states non-verbally—i.e., through facial expression, posture, voice, and tendency to weep

4= Patient reports VIRTUALLY ONLY these feeling states in his spontaneous verbal and non-verbal communication

2. **FEELINGS OF GUILT**

_____ 0= Absent

1= Self reproach, feels he has let people down

2= Ideas of guilt or rumination over past errors or sinful deeds

3= Present illness is a punishment. Delusions of guilt

4= Hears accusatory or denunciatory voices and/or experiences threatening visual hallucinations

No role for initial severity on the efficacy of antidepressants: results of a multi-meta-analysis

Konstantinos N Fountoulakis^{1*}, Areti Angeliki Veroniki², Melina Siamouli¹ and Hans-Jürgen Möller³

The use of SMD in a Bayesian RE meta-regression model suggests that the standardised effect size of antidepressants relative to placebo is 0.27 (0.27–0.42), and there is no significant role for the initial severity of depression. The most probable raw HDRS change score is 2.82 (2.21–3.44) extending above 3. Our analysis

The results reported here conclude the debate on the efficacy of antidepressants



No role for initial severity on the efficacy of antidepressants: results of a multi-meta-analysis

Konstantinos N Fountoulakis^{1*}, Areti Angeliki Veroniki², Melina Siamouli¹ and Hans-Jürgen Möller³

Competing interests

KNF has received support concerning travel and accommodation expenses from various pharmaceutical companies in order to participate in medical congresses. He has also received honoraria for lectures from Astra-Zeneca, Janssen-Cilag, Eli-Lilly and a research grant from Pfizer Foundation. **MS** has received support concerning travel and accommodation expenses from various pharmaceutical companies. **HJM** has received grants or is a consultant for and on the speakership bureaus of AstraZeneca, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Eisai, Eli Lilly, GlaxoSmithKline, Janssen Cilag, Lundbeck, Merck, Novartis, Organon, Pfizer, Sanofi-Aventis, Schering-Plough, Sepracor, Servier and Wyeth. **AAV** has

4



18



Anti-depressants: Major study finds they work

By Alex Therrien
Health reporter, BBC News

🕒 22 February 2018

Scientists say they have settled one of medicine's biggest debates after a huge study found that anti-depressants work.

The study, which analysed data from 522 trials involving 116,477 people, found 21 common anti-depressants were all more effective at reducing symptoms of acute depression than dummy pills.

Anti-depressants: Major study finds they work

By Alex Therrien
Health reporter, BBC News

🕒 22 February 2018



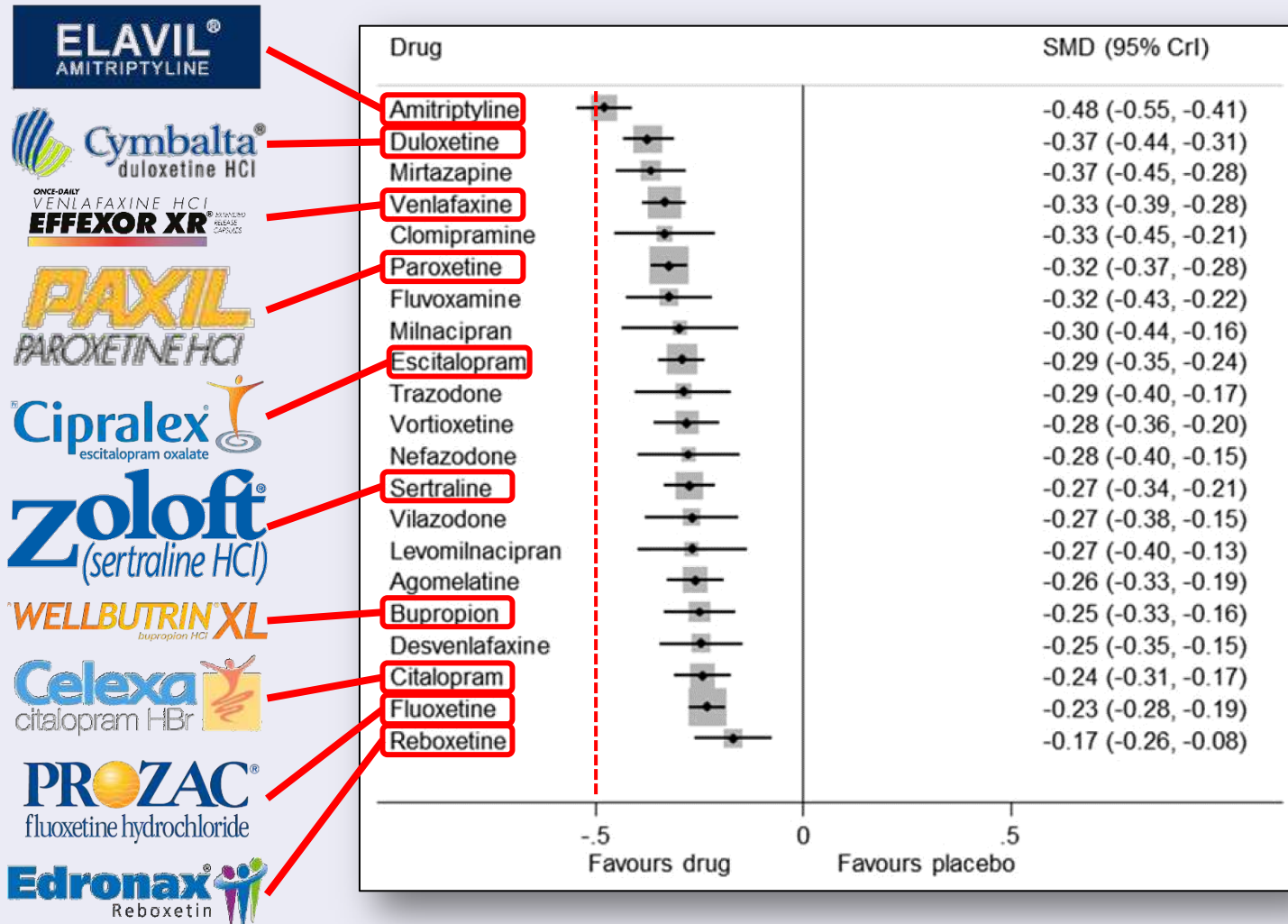
Lead researcher Dr Andrea Cipriani, from the University of Oxford, told the BBC: "This study is the **final answer to a long-standing controversy** about whether anti-depressants work for depression.

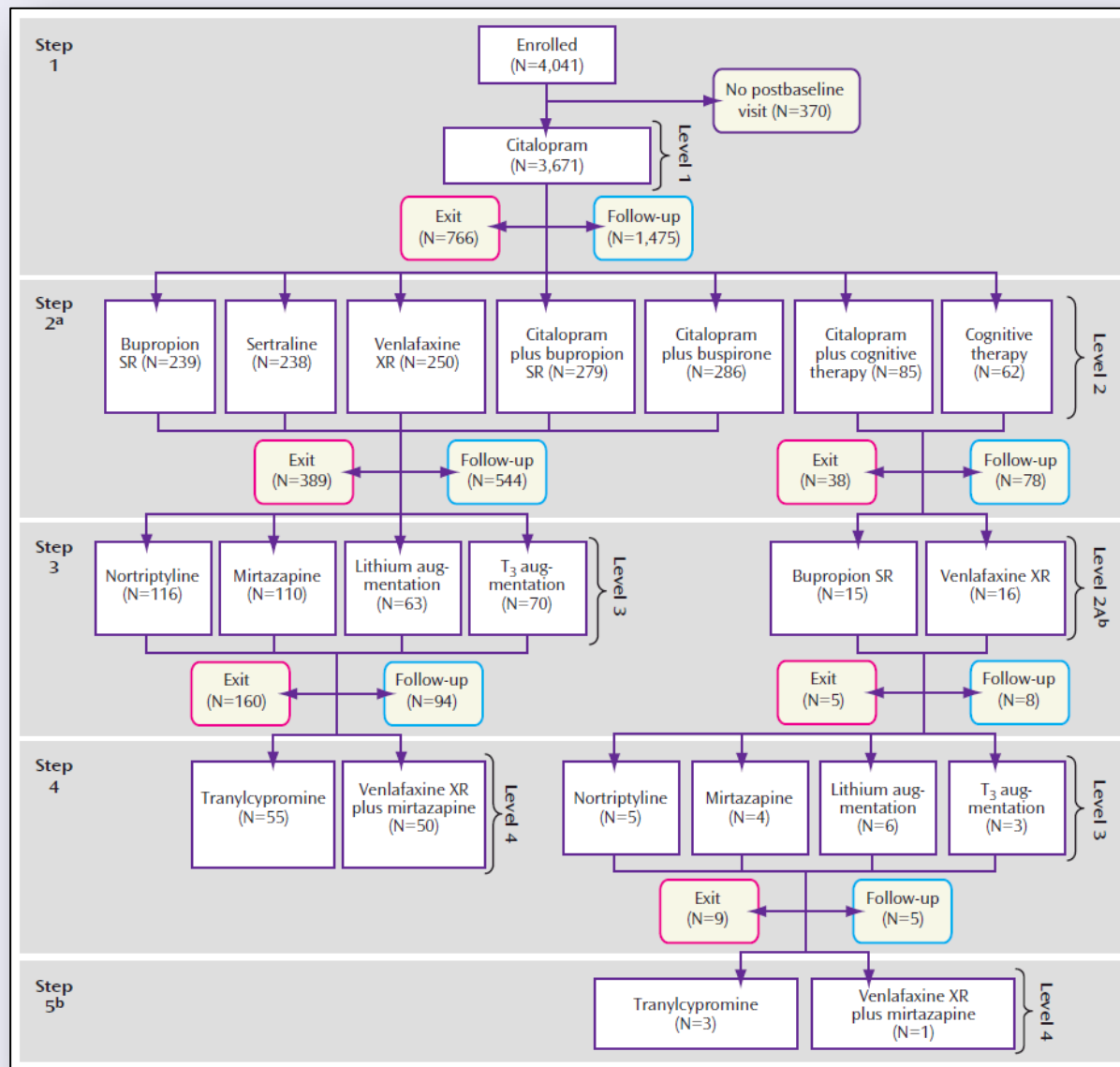
Comparative efficacy and acceptability of 21 antidepressant drugs for the acute treatment of adults with major depressive disorder: a systematic review and network meta-analysis

Andrea Cipriani, Toshi A Furukawa*, Georgia Salanti*, Anna Chaimani, Lauren Z Atkinson, Yusuke Ogawa, Stefan Leucht, Henricus G Ruhe, Erick H Turner, Julian P T Higgins, Matthias Egger, Nozomi Takeshima, Yu Hayasaka, Hissei Imai, Kiyomi Shinohara, Aran Tajika, John P A Ioannidis, John R Geddes

The relative efficacy of antidepressants compared with placebo is also shown for remission (appendix pp 152, 153). The random-effects summary SMD for all antidepressants was 0.30 (95% CrI 0.26–0.34; $p < 0.0001$; appendix pp 150, 151). In terms of dropouts due to

Comparative efficacy and acceptability of 21 antidepressant drugs for the acute treatment of adults with major depressive disorder: a systematic review and network meta-analysis







National Institute of Mental Health

Questions and Answers about the NIMH Sequenced Treatment Alternatives to Relieve Depression (STAR*D) Study – All Medication Levels

November 2006

In conclusion, about half of participants in the STAR*D study became symptom-free after two treatment levels. Over the course of all four treatment levels, almost 70 percent of those who did not withdraw from the study became symptom-free. However, the rate

The STAR*D study: Treating depression in the real world

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Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of North Carolina School of Medicine; Investigator, Sequenced Treatment Alternatives to Relieve Depression (STAR*D) study

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STEPHEN R. WISNIEWSKI, PhD*

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University of North Carolina School of Medicine; Professor of Family Medicine; Investigator, STAR*D study

MAURIZIO FAVA, MD*

Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston; Professor of Psychiatry; Investigator, STAR*D study

- For patients who present with major depressive disorder, STAR*D suggests that with persistence and aggressive yet feasible care, **there is hope** after one round, approximately 30% will have a remission; after two rounds, 50%; after three rounds, 60%; and after four rounds, 70%.

The **theoretical** cumulative remission rate after four acute treatment steps was 67%.

The STAR*D Trial: It Is Time to Reexamine the Clinical Beliefs That Guide the Treatment of Major Depression

H Edmund Pigott, PhD¹

telephonic QIDS-SR assessments. After up to 4 rounds of AD drug–drug combination treatments, the cumulative rate of patients who did not have a confirmed relapse improved to only 23.5%. When drop out is added, the durability of treatment effects is even paltrier. Only 2.7% of patients had a QIDS-SR determined remission after up to 4 rounds of AD drug care and neither relapsed nor dropped out as evidenced by taking at least 1 of the months 10-to-12 QIDS-SR telephonic assessments and not scoring as having relapsed in any of the 12 monthly administered assessments.

Selective Publication of Antidepressant Trials and Its Influence on Apparent Efficacy

Erick H. Turner, M.D., Annette M. Matthews, M.D., Eftihia Linardatos, B.S.,
Robert A. Tell, L.C.S.W., and Robert Rosenthal, Ph.D.

Published
literature:
94% of the
trials were
positive

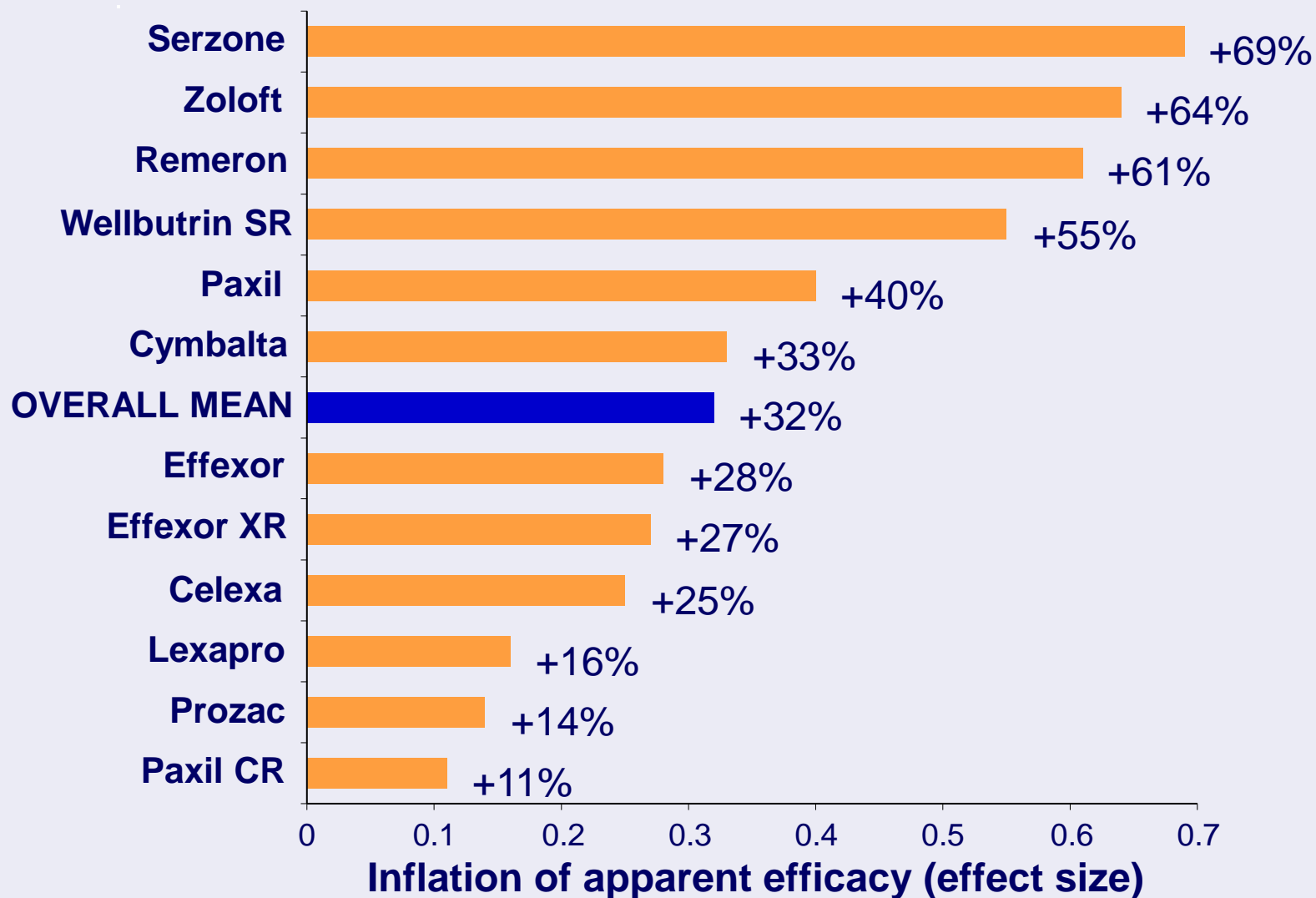
FDA database:
51% of the
trials were
positive

RESULTS

According to the published literature, 94% of the trials conducted were positive. By contrast, the FDA analysis showed that 51% were positive. Separate meta-analyses of the FDA and journal data sets showed that the increase in effect size ranged from 11 to 69% for individual drugs and was 32% overall.

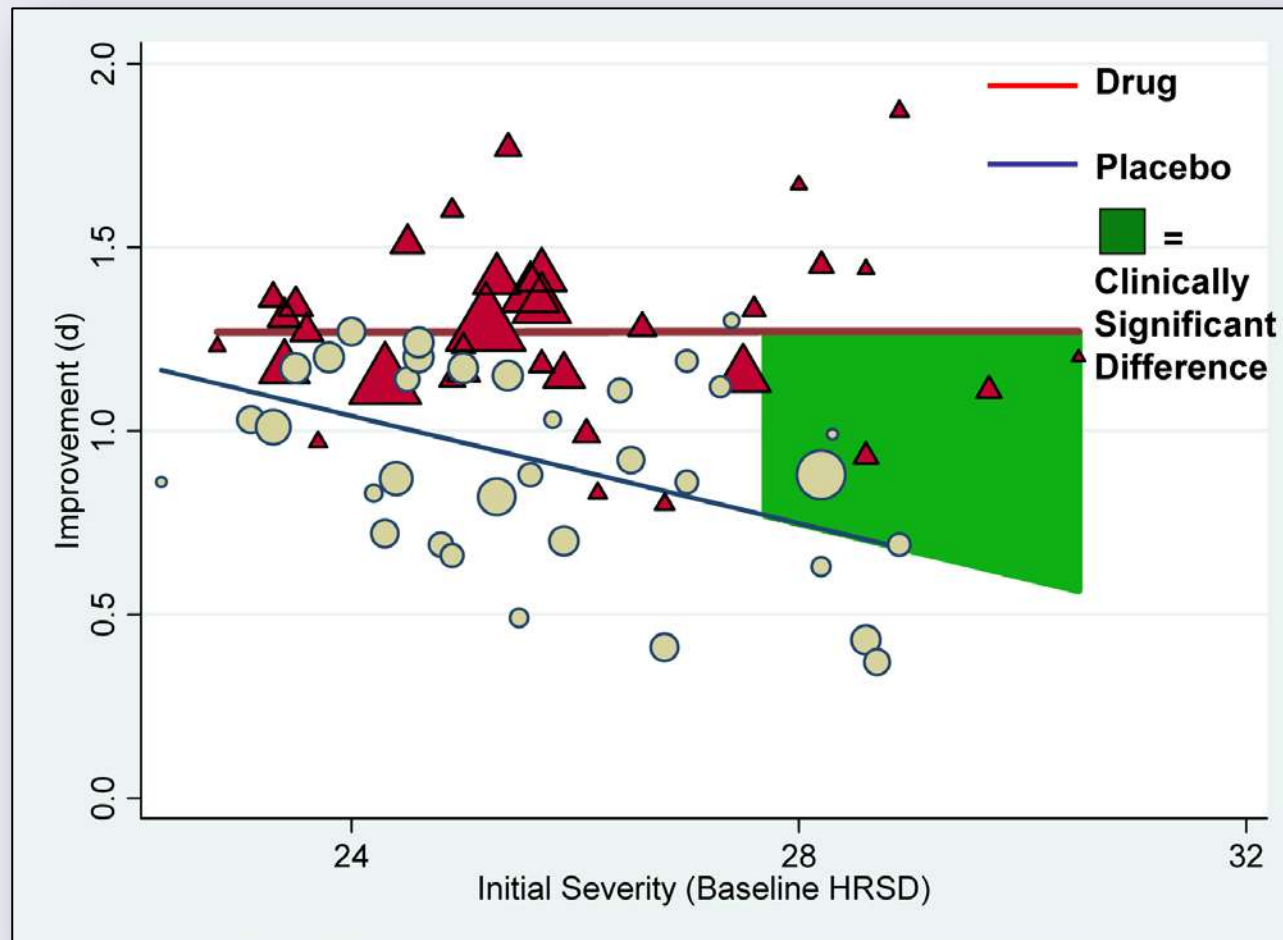


Selective Publication of Antidepressant Trials and Its Influence on Apparent Efficacy



Initial Severity and Antidepressant Benefits: A Meta-Analysis of Data Submitted to the Food and Drug Administration

Irving Kirsch^{1*}, Brett J. Deacon², Tania B. Huedo-Medina³, Alan Scoboria⁴, Thomas J. Moore⁵, Blair T. Johnson³



Irving Kirsch

Antidepressants: Examples of Possible Side Effects

Relatively minor; usually short-lived

- Diarrhea
- Dizziness
- Dry mouth
- Headaches
- Nausea
- Sweating
- Tremors

**More serious. Can be dangerous.
May need to switch drugs if they persist.**

- Drowsiness or confusion
- Feeling of panic or dread
- Increased thoughts of suicide
- Insomnia
- Loss of libido, difficulty achieving erections, inability to reach orgasm
- Nervousness and agitation
- Weight gain




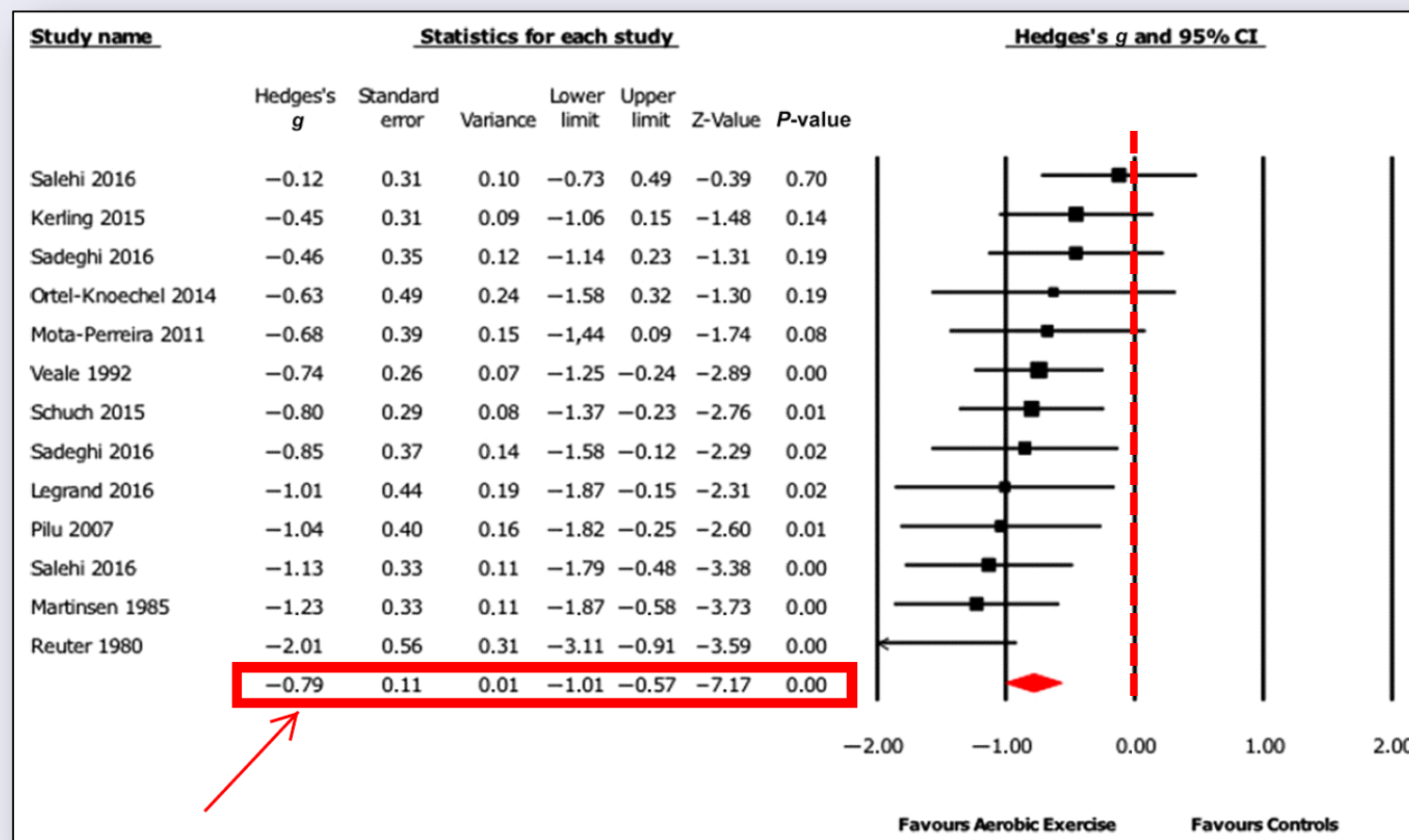
WARNING: Suicidality and Antidepressant Drugs

See full prescribing information for complete boxed warning.

- **Increased risk of suicidal thinking and behavior in children, adolescents, and young adults taking antidepressants for major depressive disorder (MDD) and other psychiatric disorders. Cymbalta is not approved for use in pediatric patients (5.1).**

Aerobic exercise for adult patients with major depressive disorder in mental health services: A systematic review and meta-analysis

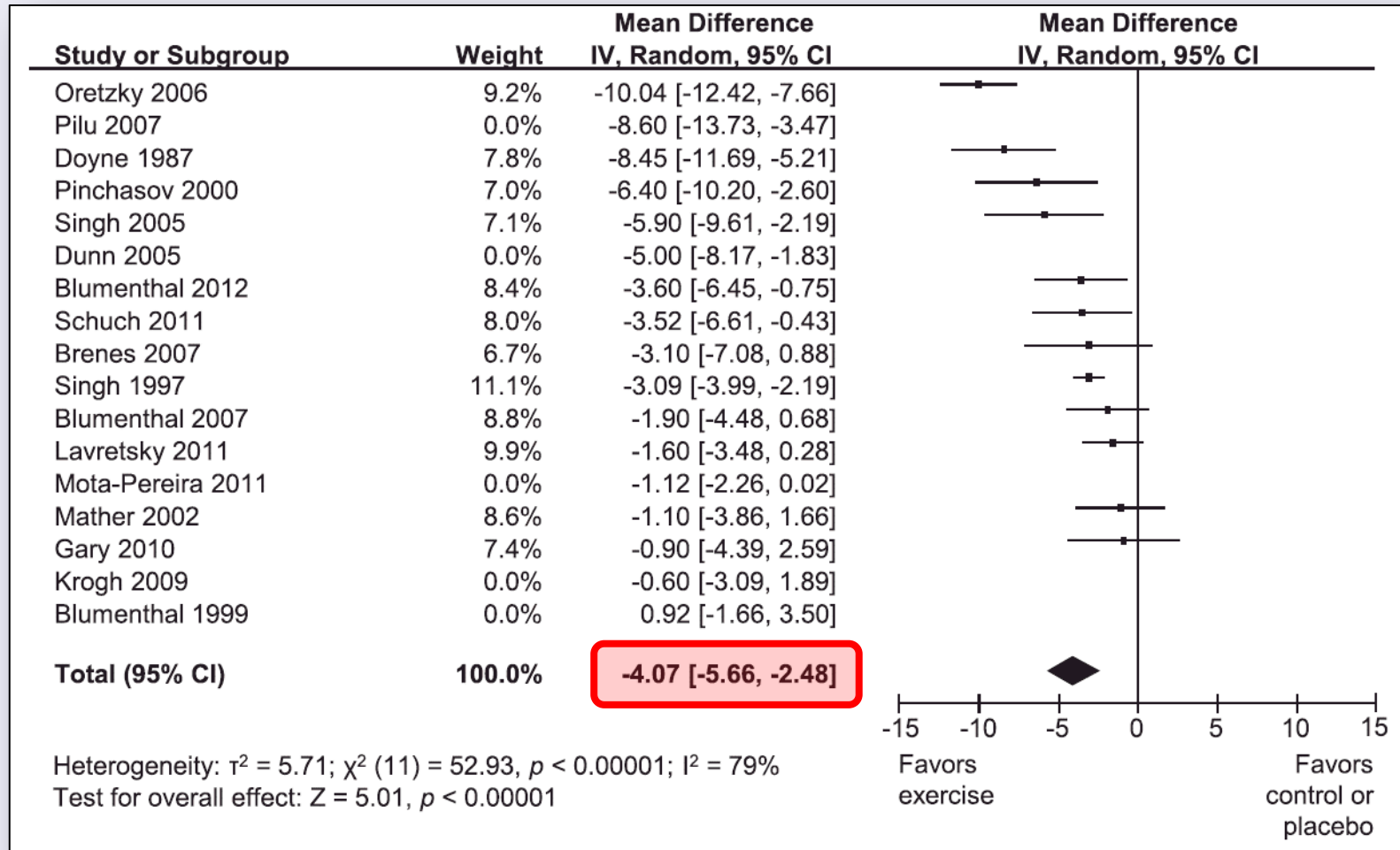
Ioannis D. Morres¹  | Antonis Hatzigeorgiadis¹ | Afroditi Stathi² |
Nikos Comoutos¹ | Chantal Arpin-Cribbie³ | Charalampos Krommidas¹ |
Yannis Theodorakis¹



Honey, I shrunk the pooled SMD! Guide to critical appraisal of systematic reviews and meta-analyses using the Cochrane review on exercise for depression as example

Panteleimon Ekkekakis*

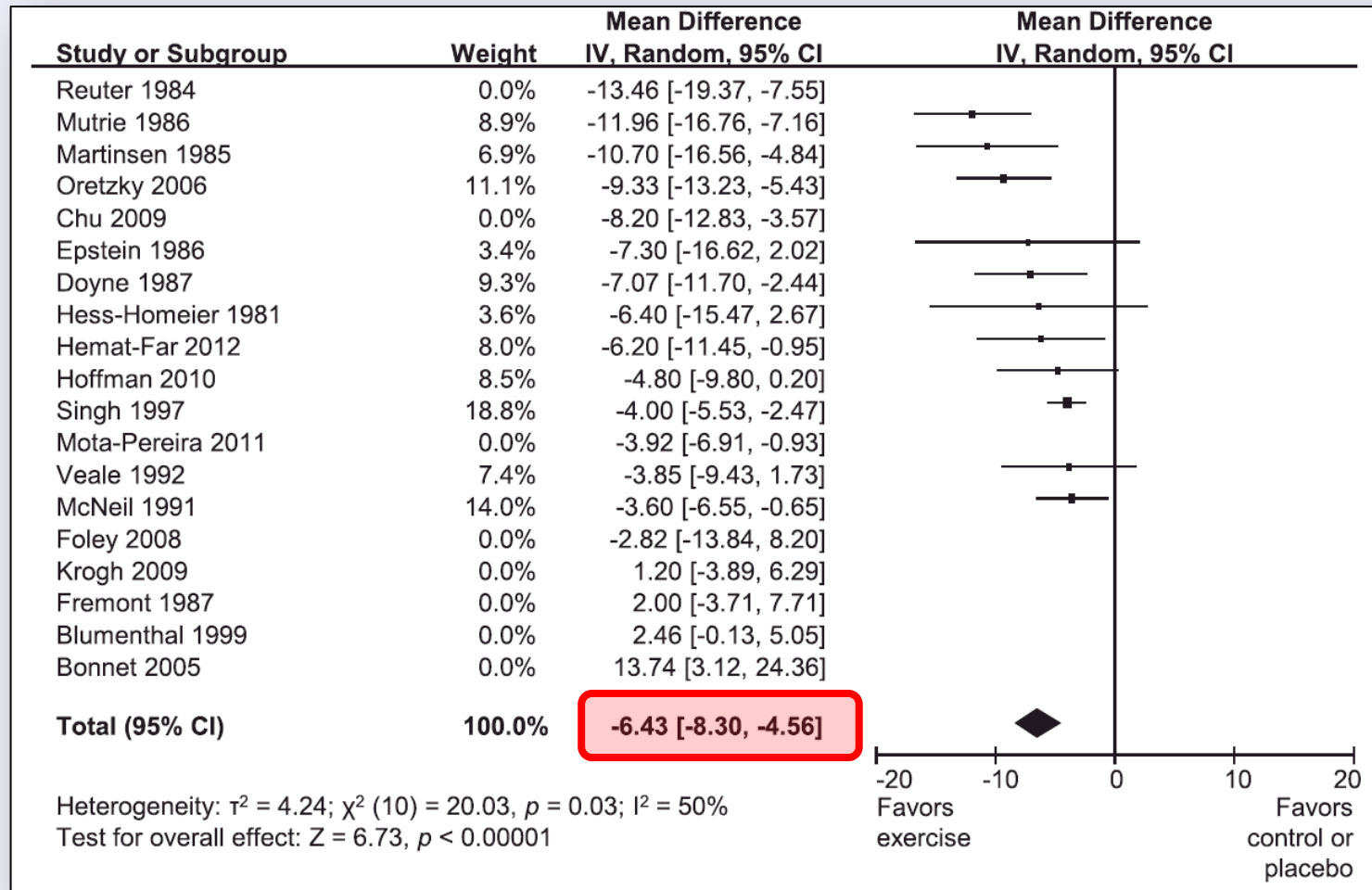
Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (HRSD)



Honey, I shrunk the pooled SMD! Guide to critical appraisal of systematic reviews and meta-analyses using the Cochrane review on exercise for depression as example

Panteleimon Ekkekakis*

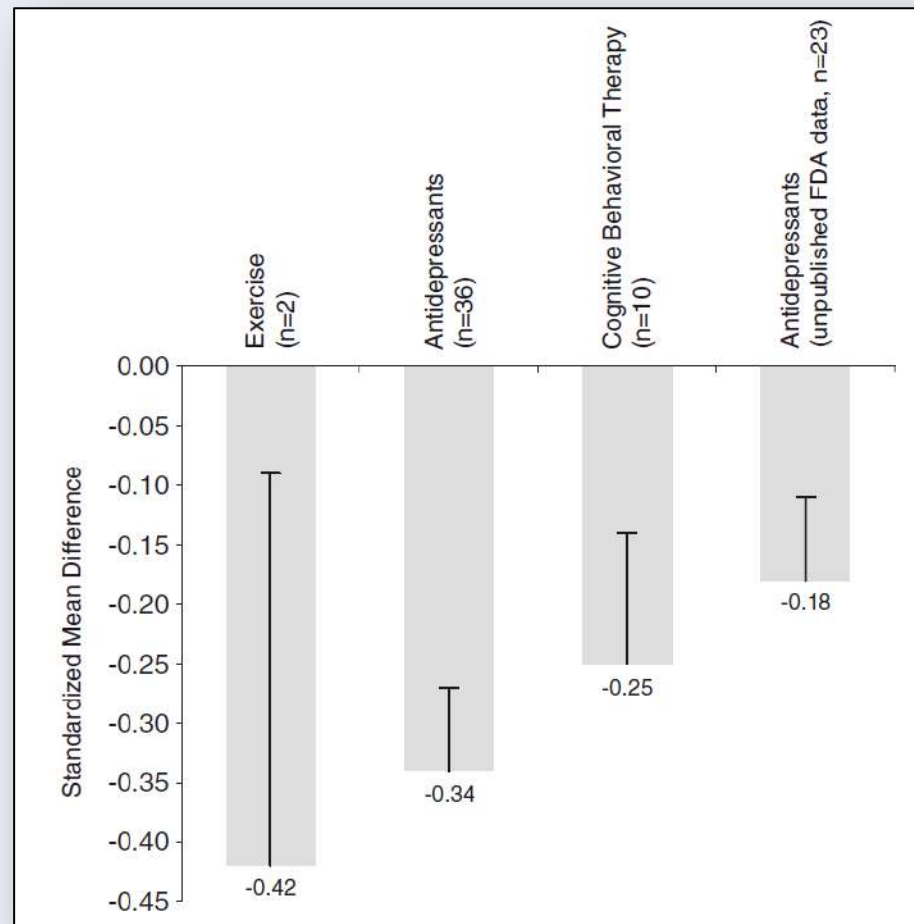
Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)



Exercise as antidepressant treatment: Time for the transition from trials to clinic?

Panteleimon Ekkekakis^{a,*}, Martino Belvederi Murri^b

Compared to pill placebo

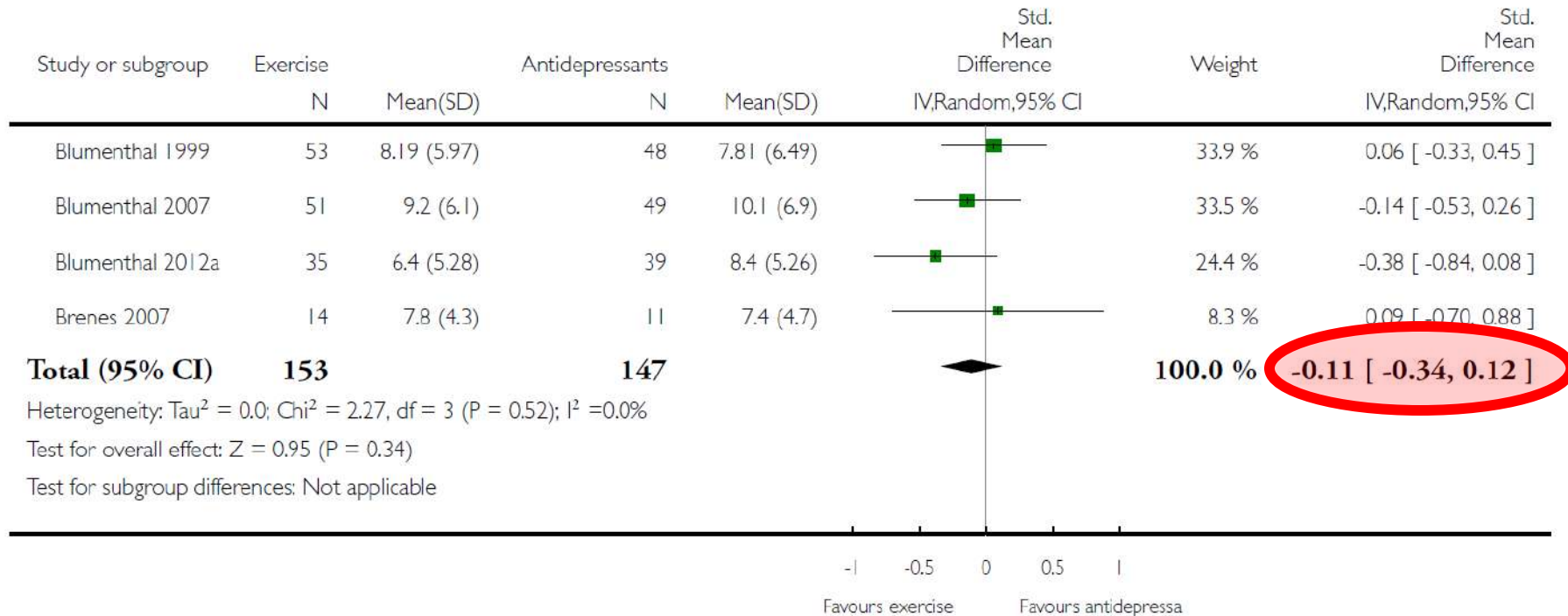


Exercise for depression (Review)

Cooney GM, Dwan K, Greig CA, Lawlor DA, Rimer J, Waugh FR, McMurdo M, Mead GE



Compared to Antidepressant Medications

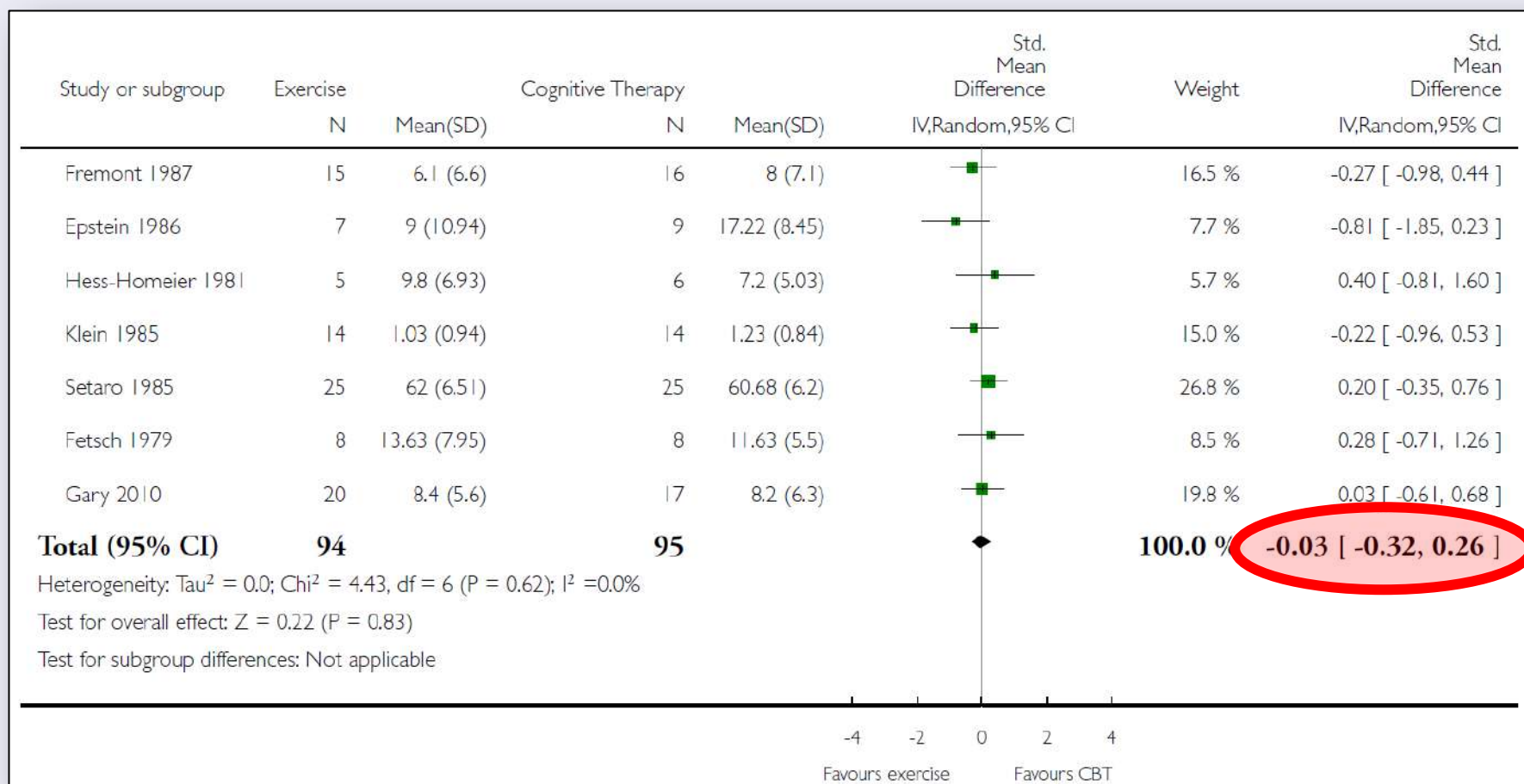


Exercise for depression (Review)

Cooney GM, Dwan K, Greig CA, Lawlor DA, Rimer J, Waugh FR, McMurdo M, Mead GE



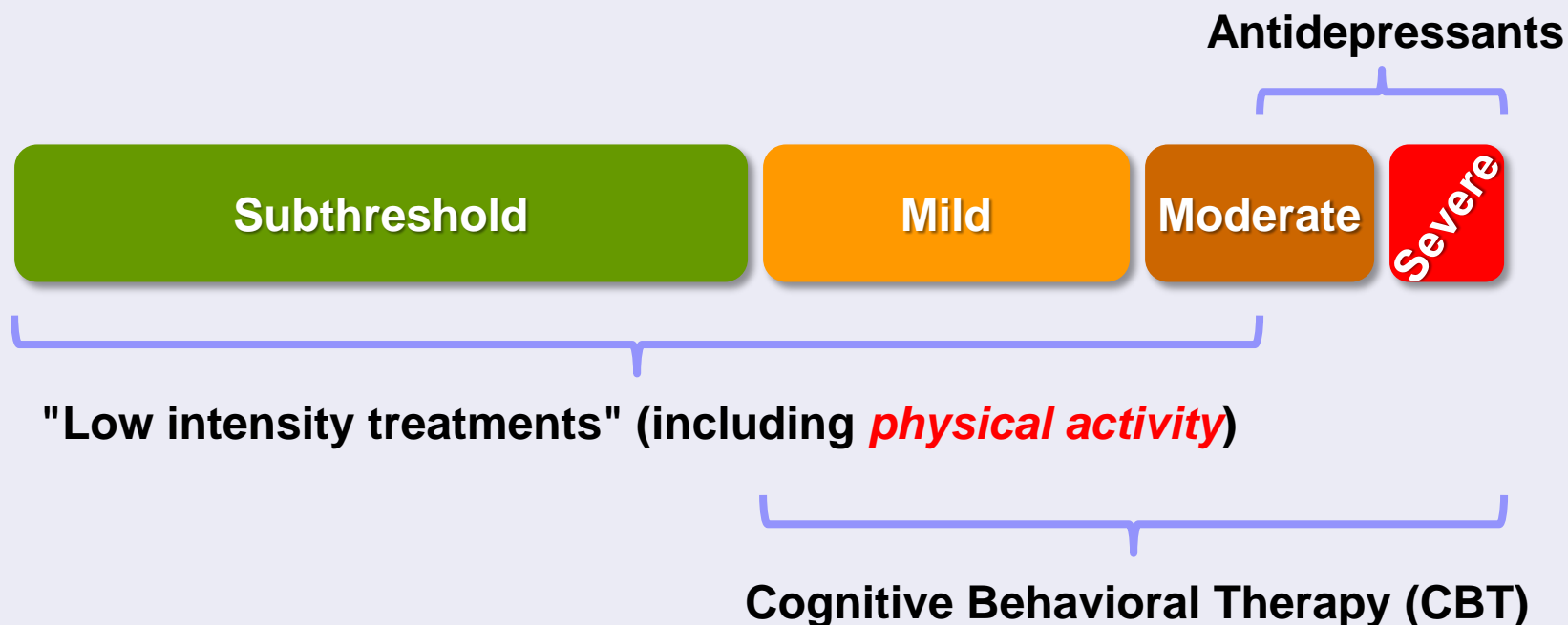
Compared to Psychotherapy

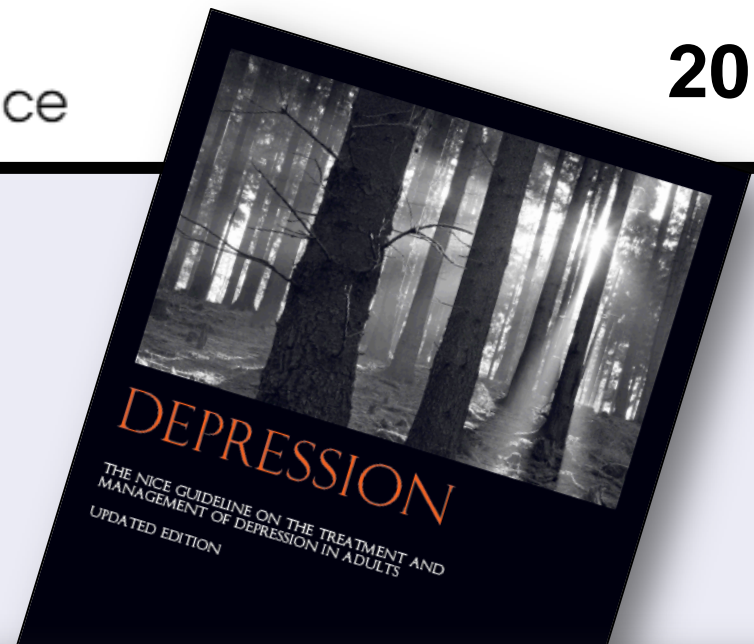




**Evidence-based
clinical practice /
public health
guidelines**

"Stepped (Collaborative) Care Approach"





7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Low-intensity psychosocial interventions

- 7.5.1.1 For people with persistent subthreshold depressive symptoms or mild to moderate depression, consider offering one or more of the following interventions, guided by the person's preference:
- individual guided self-help based on the principles of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
 - computerised cognitive behavioural therapy (CCBT)⁵²
 - a structured group physical activity programme.



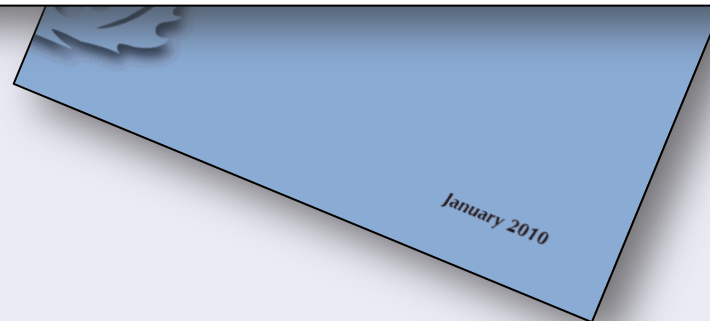
SIGN

Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network



B

Structured exercise may be considered as a treatment option for patients with depression.





In patients who report with mild depression (non-suicidal, non-psychotic), with a first episode of less than 3 months, physical effort or physical activity should be considered as first-step intervention.

If after a period of 3 months with physical exertion or physical activity no or insufficient effect appears, another intervention should be considered.

In patients who report with mild depression (non-suicidal, non-psychotic), with a first episode lasting more than 3 months or a relapse, consideration should be given to adding physical exercise or physical activity to the basic interventions.

In patients who report with a (moderately) severe depression (non-suicidal, non-psychotic), with a first episode or recurrence, consideration should be given to adding physical exertion or physical activity to the basic interventions.

Canadian Network for Mood and Anxiety Treatments (CANMAT) 2016 Clinical Guidelines for the Management of Adults with Major Depressive Disorder: Section 5. Complementary and Alternative Medicine Treatments

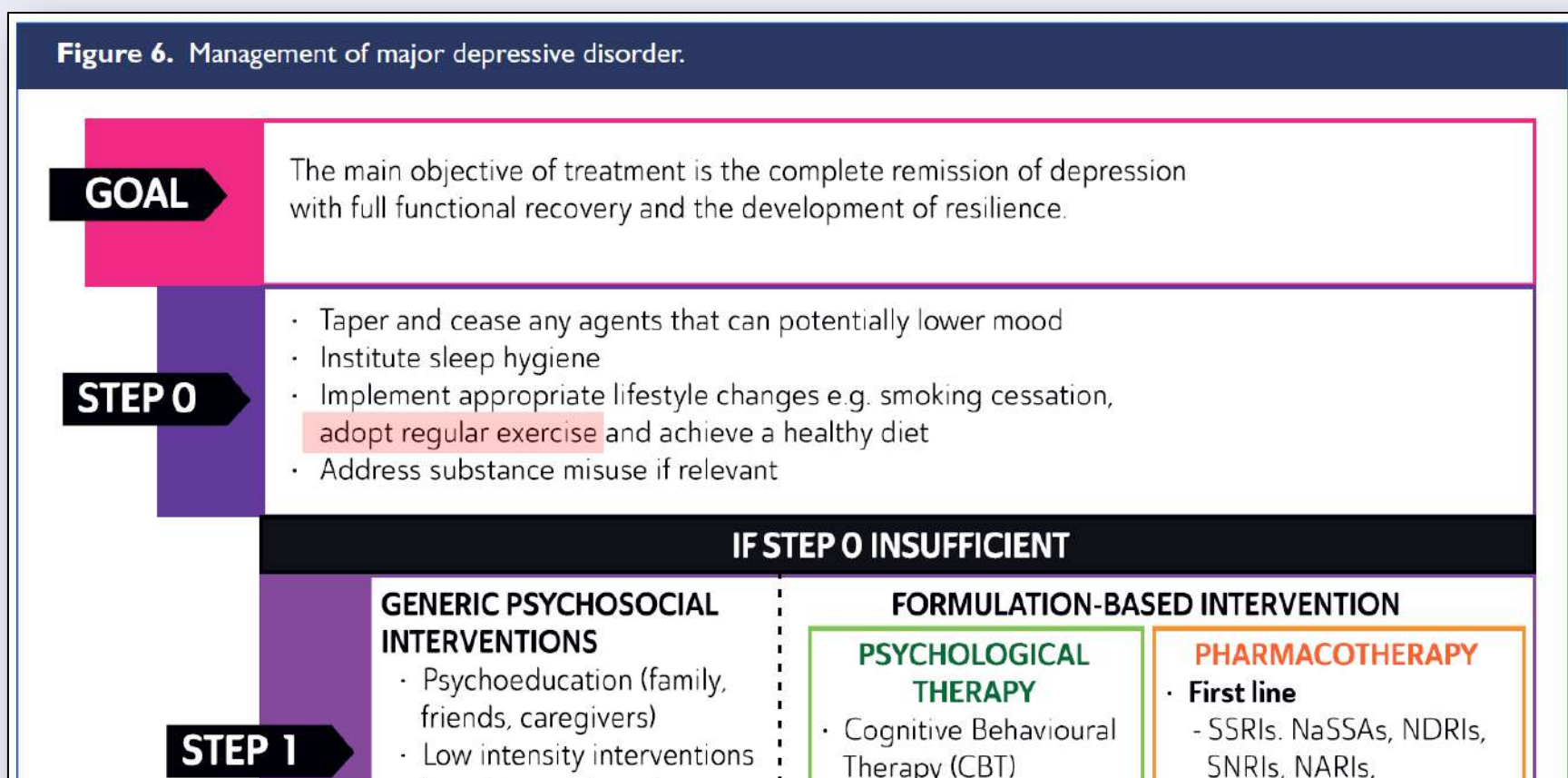
Arun V. Ravindran, MB, PhD¹, Lynda G. Balneaves, PhD¹,
 Guy Faulkner, PhD², Abigail Ortiz, MD, MSc³, Diane McIntosh, MD⁴,
 Rachel L. Morehouse, MD⁵, Lakshmi Ravindran, MD¹,
 Lakshmi N. Yatham, MB, MBA (Exec)⁴, Sidney H. Kennedy, MD¹,
 Raymond W. Lam, MD⁴, Glenda M. MacQueen, MD, PhD⁶,
 Roumen V. Milev, MD, PhD⁷, Sagar V. Parikh, MD^{1,8},
 and the CANMAT Depression Work Group⁹

Table 2. Summary of Recommendations for Physical and Meditative Treatments.

Intervention	Indication	Recommendation	Evidence	Monotherapy or Adjunctive Therapy
Exercise	Mild to moderate MDD	First line	Level I	Monotherapy
	Moderate to severe MDD	Second line	Level I	Adjunctive

Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists clinical practice guidelines for mood disorders

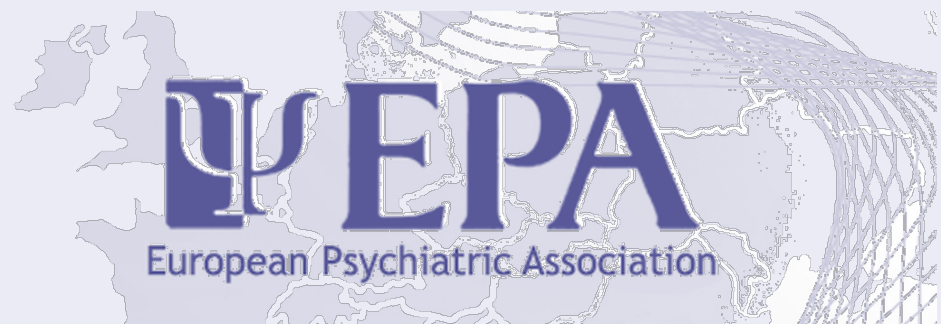
Figure 6. Management of major depressive disorder.



EPA guidance on physical activity as a treatment for severe mental illness: a meta-review of the evidence and Position Statement from the European Psychiatric Association (EPA), supported by the International Organization of Physical Therapists in Mental Health (IOPTMH)

Brendon Stubbs^{a,b,*}, Davy Vancampfort^c, Mats Hallgren^d, Joseph Firth^{e,f}, Nicola Veronese^g, Marco Solmi^h, Serge Brand^{i,j,k}, Joachim Cordes^l, Berend Malchow^m, Markus Gerber^j, Andrea Schmitt^{m,n}, Christoph U. Correll^{o,p,q}, Marc De Hert^r, Fiona Gaughran^{a,b}, Frank Schneider^s, Florence Kinnafick^t, Peter Falkai^m, Hans-Jürgen Möller^m, Kai G. Kahl^u

recommendations. For MDD, consistent evidence indicated that PA can improve depressive symptoms versus control conditions, with effects comparable to those of antidepressants and psychotherapy. PA can also improve cardiorespiratory fitness and quality of life in people with MDD, although the impact on physical health outcomes was limited. There were no differences in adverse events versus control conditions. For MDD, larger effect sizes were seen when PA was delivered at moderate-vigorous intensity and supervised by an exercise specialist. For schizophrenia-spectrum disorders, evidence



PRACTICE GUIDELINE FOR THE Treatment of Patients With Major Depressive Disorder

Third Edition

WORK GROUP ON MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER

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Jan A. Fawcett, M.D.
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David A. Silbersweig, M.D.

This practice guideline was approved in May 2010 and published in October 2010. A guideline watch, summarizing significant developments in the scientific literature since publication of this guideline, may be available at http://www.psychiatryonline.com/pracGuide/pracGuideTopic_7.aspx.

“If a patient wishes to try exercise... there is little to argue against it...”

If a patient with mild depression wishes to try exercise alone for several weeks as a first intervention, there is little to argue against it (Section II.A.10), provided the patient is sufficiently monitored for an abrupt worsening of mood or adverse physical effects (e.g., ischemia or musculoskeletal symptoms). The dose of exercise and adherence to an exer-





Severity of Illness	Modality			
	Pharmacotherapy	Depression-Focused Psychotherapy	Pharmacotherapy in Combination With Depression-Focused Psychotherapy	Electroconvulsive Therapy
Mild to Moderate	Yes	Yes	May be useful for patients with psychosocial or interpersonal problems, intrapsychic conflict, or co-occurring Axis II disorder	Yes, for certain patients
Severe Without Psychotic Features	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Severe With Psychotic Features	Yes, provide both antidepressant and antipsychotic medication	No	Yes, provide both antidepressant and antipsychotic medication	Yes

FIGURE 1. Recommended Modalities for Acute Phase Treatment of Major Depressive Disorder

Conflicts of interest and the quality of recommendations in clinical guidelines[†]

Lisa Cosgrove, PhD^{1,2} Harold J. Bursztajn, MD⁴ Deborah R. Erlich, MD, MmedEd⁵, Emily E. Wheeler, MS³ and Allen F. Shaughnessy, PharmD, MmedEd⁶

Dr. Thase reports that he provided scientific consultation to AstraZeneca, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Eli Lilly & Company, Forest Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Gerson Lehman Group, GlaxoSmithKline, Guidepoint Global, H. Lundbeck A/S, MedAvante, Inc., Neuronetics, Inc., Novartis, Otsuka, Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceuticals, PamLab, L.L.C., Pfizer (formerly Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories), Schering-Plough (formerly Organon), Shire U.S., Inc., Supernus Pharmaceuticals, Takeda (Lundbeck), and Transcept Pharmaceuticals. He was a member of the speakers' bureaus for

results. One-fifth (19.7%) of the references were not congruent with the recommendations. Financial ties to industry were disclosed by all members (100%) of the guideline development committee with members reporting a mean 20.5 relationships (range 9–33). The majority of the committee participated on pharmaceutical companies' speakers' bureaus.

and Company, GlaxoSmithKline, the National Institute of Mental Health, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and Sepracor, Inc. He had equity holdings in MedAvante, Inc., and received royalty income from American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc., Guilford Publications, Herald House, Oxford University Press, and W.W. Norton and Company. His wife was employed as the group scientific director for Embryon (formerly Advogent), which does business with Bristol-Myers Squibb and Pfizer/Wyeth.



**Large-scale
implementation**

Stepped care for depression is easy to recommend, but harder to implement: results of an explorative study within primary care in the Netherlands

Marleen LM Hermens^{1*}, Anna Muntingh^{1,2}, Gerdien Franx¹, Peter T van Splunteren¹ and Jasper Nuyen¹

lifestyle advice (e.g. on healthy diet and exercise). Patients were seldom referred to group courses or to running therapy. E-health interventions were provided sparsely by both the GPs and the

Figure 1: GP perceptions of the effectiveness of exercise and antidepressants for patients with mild or moderate depression

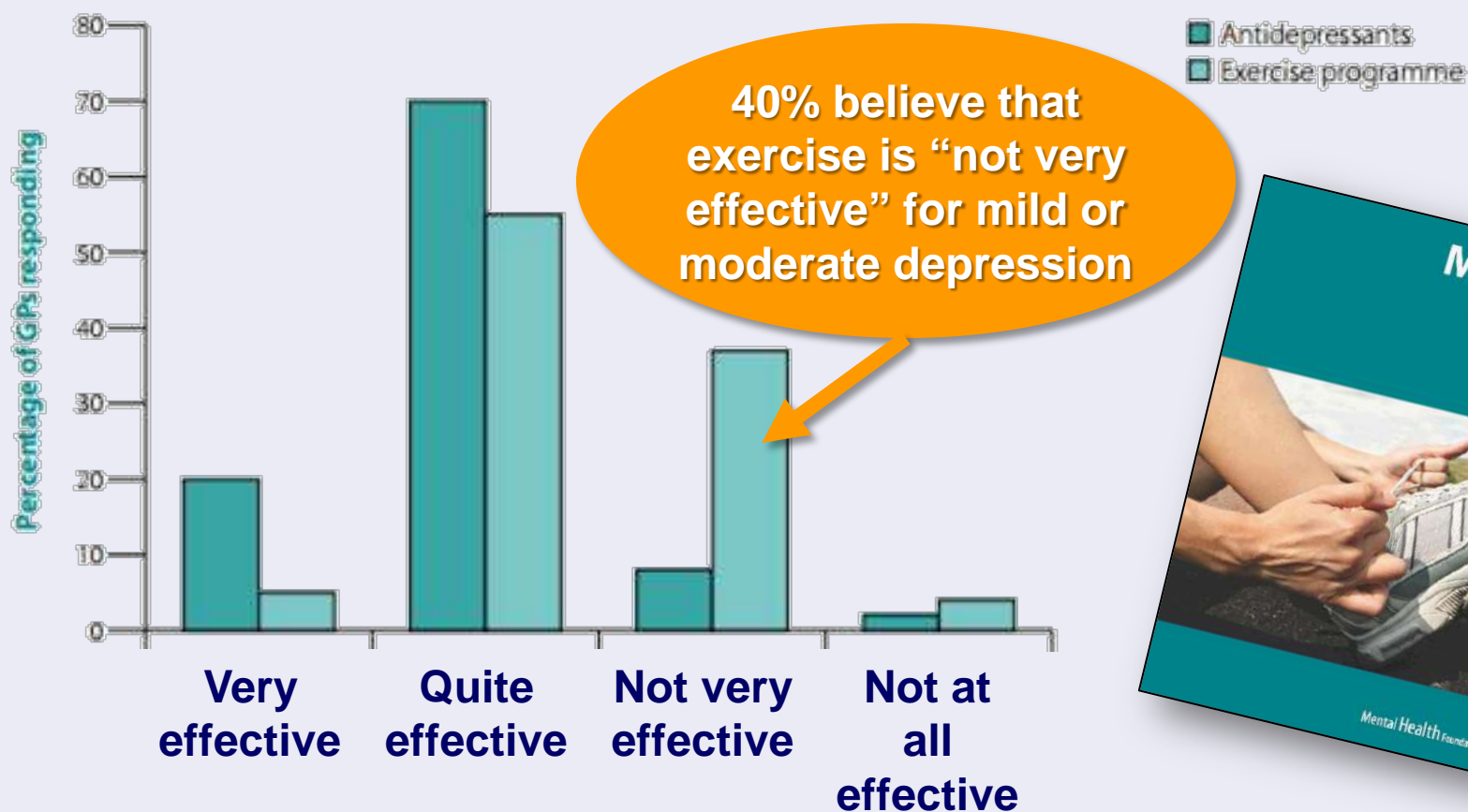
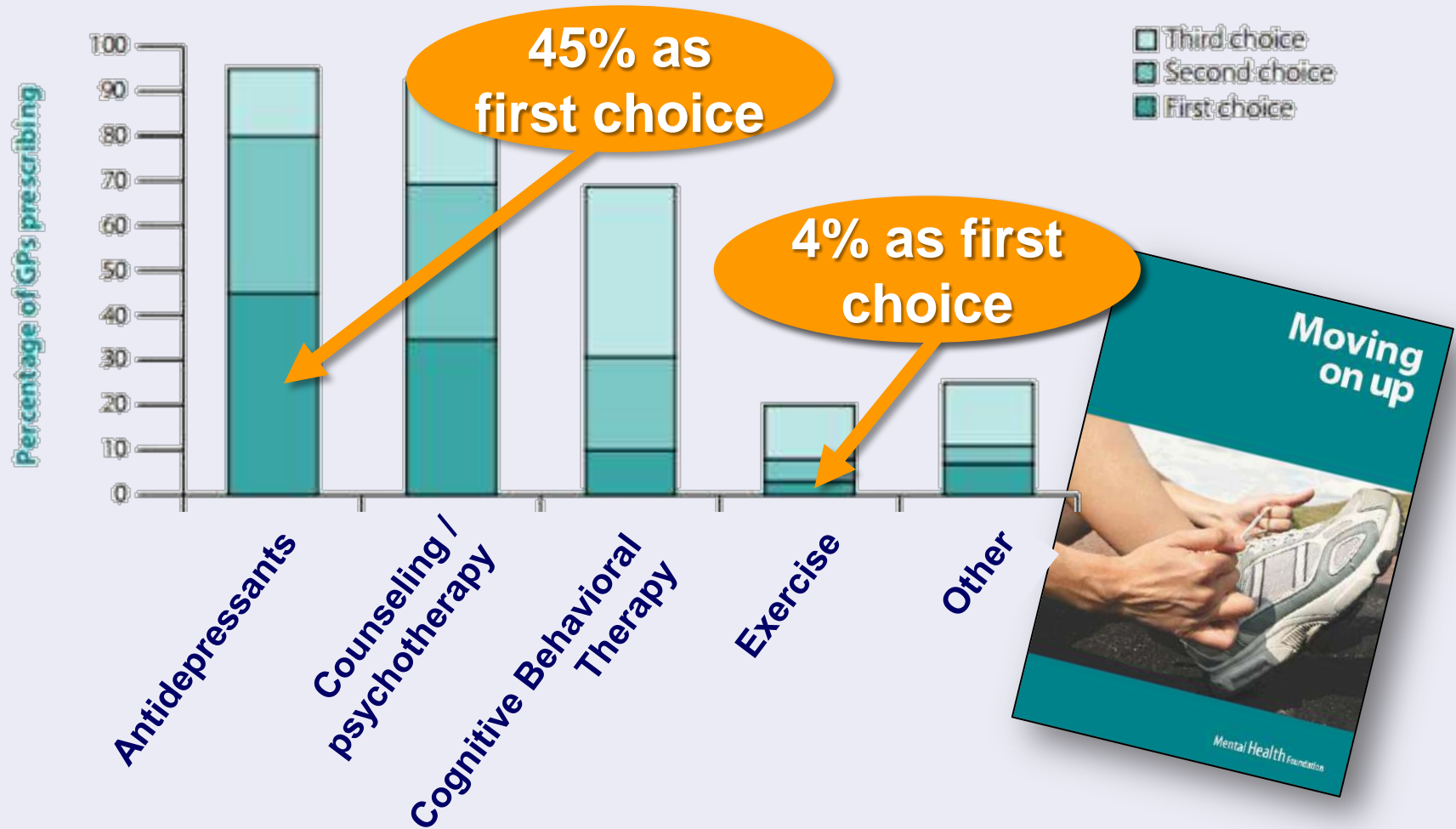


Figure 2: GP preferred choices of treatment for patients with mild or moderate depression





Nuffield Health

Prescribing exercise key to defusing 'ticking mental health time bomb'

14 October 2013

Healthcare charity calls for all GPs to consider exercise

cent) said ill health affected their mood. When asked about treatment, just one per cent of those visiting their GP were recommended exercise as a way to alleviate symptoms, compared to 46 per cent for medication. The most common treatment - medication. However, only 4 per cent of those prescribed medication

**ADs prescribed 46%
to 1% over exercise...**

**...but only 4% say they
prefer ADs to exercise**

Psychiatric benefits of physical exercise

Peter Salmon

The first arises from the slight unreality of the 'method' sections in many of the published studies; it is typically stated that the depressed subjects have been allocated to such activities as running or aerobics, or even swimming or skiing. This must puzzle clinicians who, in treating depressed people, often have to contend with an absence of motivation to tackle much less strenuous features of life's routine. So what should we make of studies

The Challenges of Treating Depression with Exercise: From Evidence to Practice

Richard J. Seime and Kristin S. Vickers, Mayo Clinic

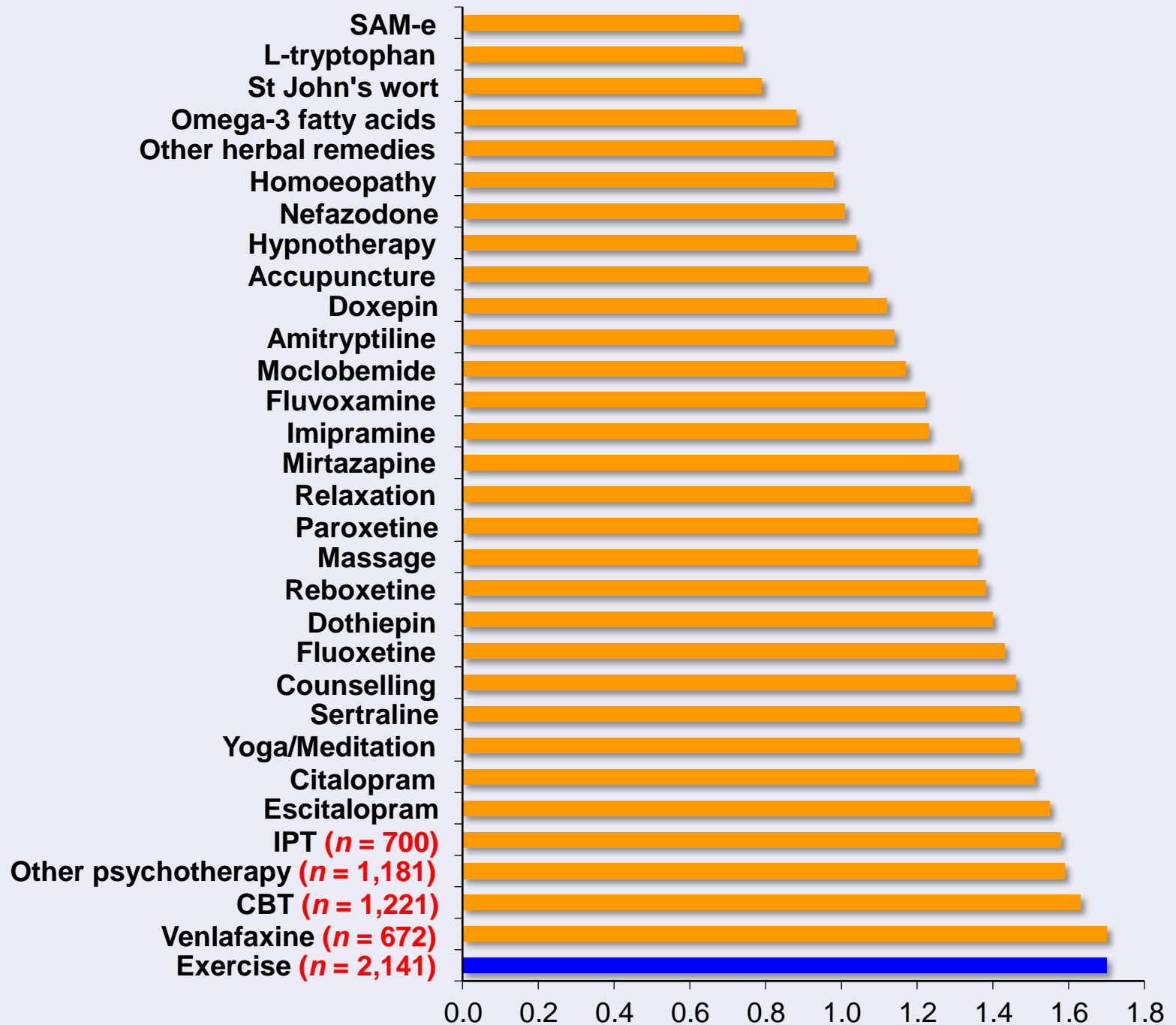
2004; Lewinsohn, 1992). The feelings of low self-esteem, helplessness, and hopelessness, added to physical inactivity and withdrawal from interacting with others, indeed make the adoption and maintenance of exercise in the depressed patient especially difficult. Consequently, the

Judged effectiveness of differing antidepressant strategies by those with clinical depression

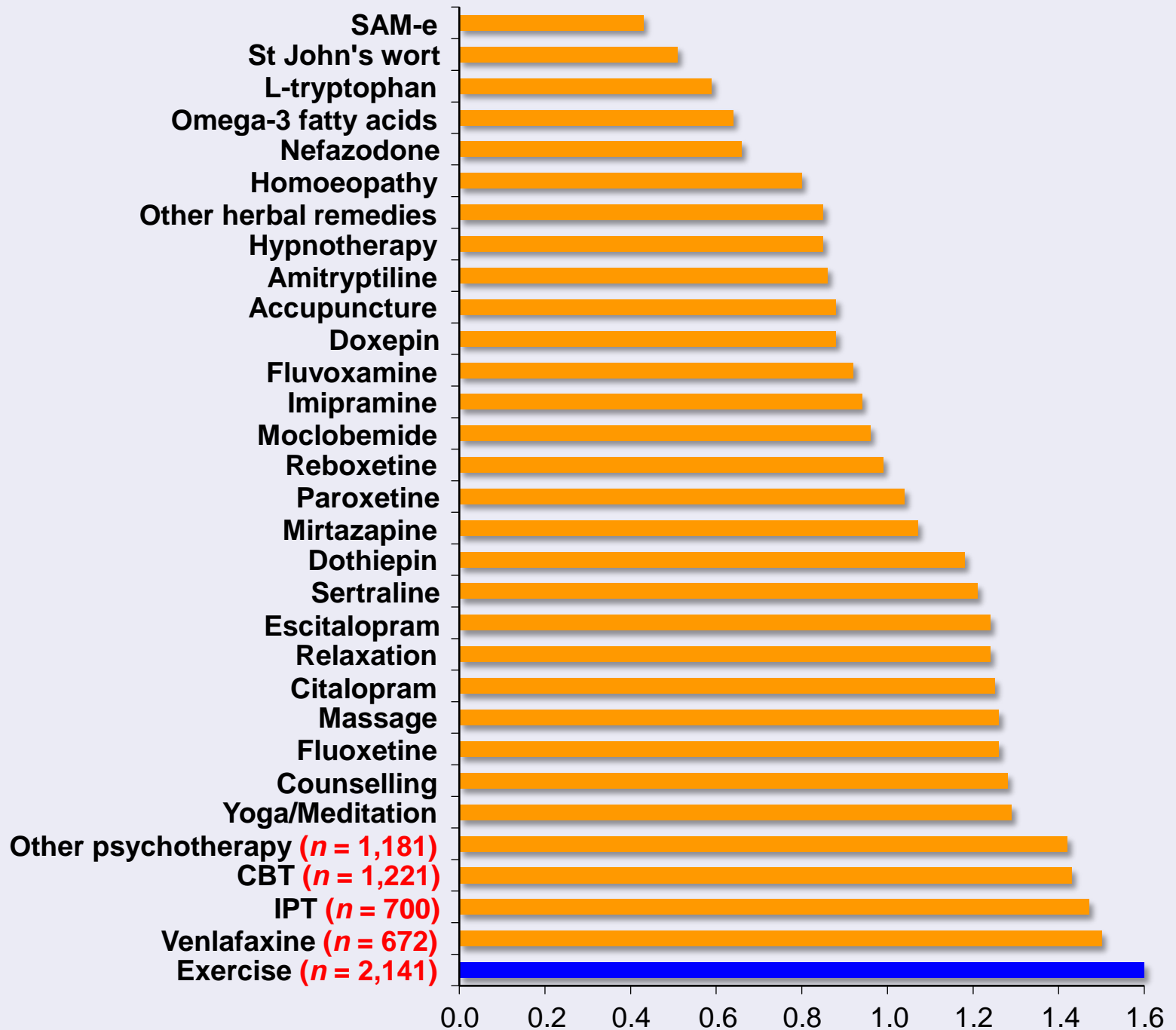
Gordon Parker, Joanna Crawford

Survey of 2,692 respondents with a clinically diagnosed depressive episode

Perceived Effectiveness



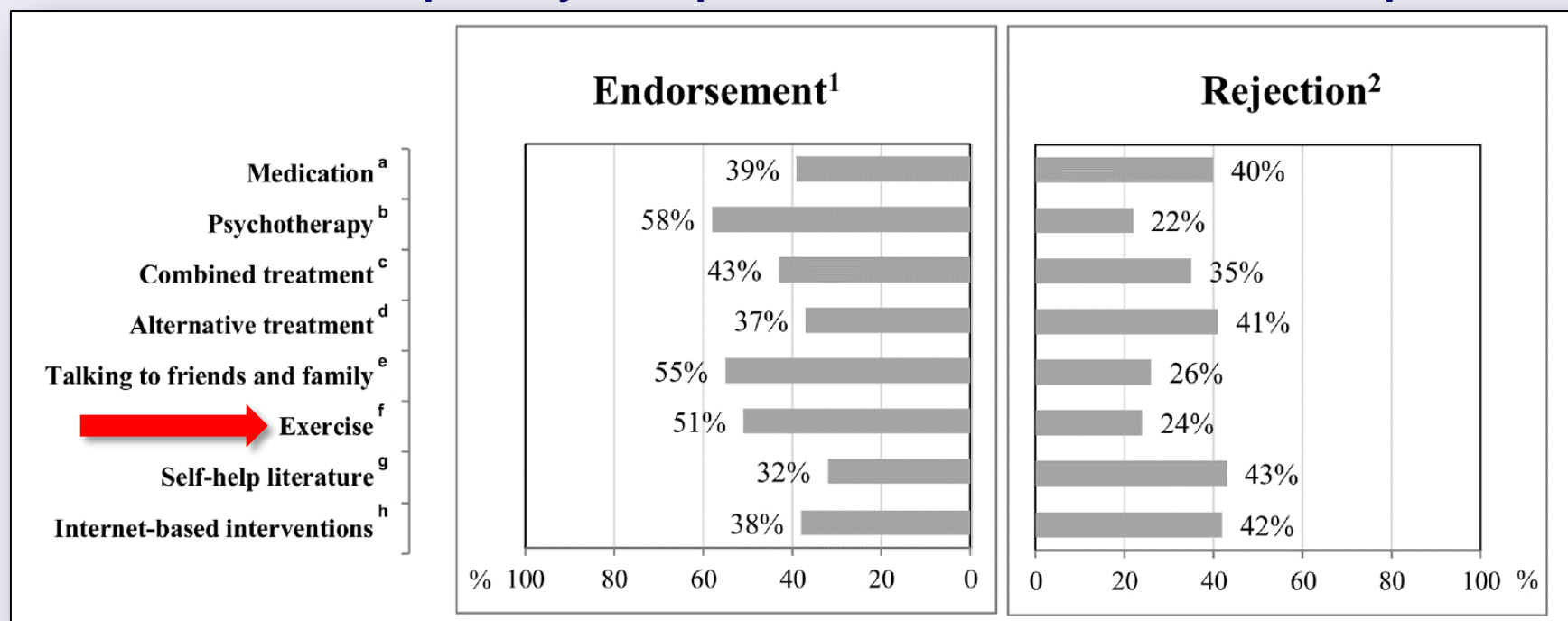
Benefit-to-Burden Ratio



Preferences for Depression Treatment Including Internet-Based Interventions: Results From a Large Sample of Primary Care Patients

Marie Dorow*, Margrit Löbner, Alexander Pabst, Janine Stein and Steffi G. Riedel-Heller

N = 641 primary care patients with mild to moderate depression



Preferences for Depression Treatment Among Elderly Home Health Care Patients

Patrick J. Raue, Ph.D.

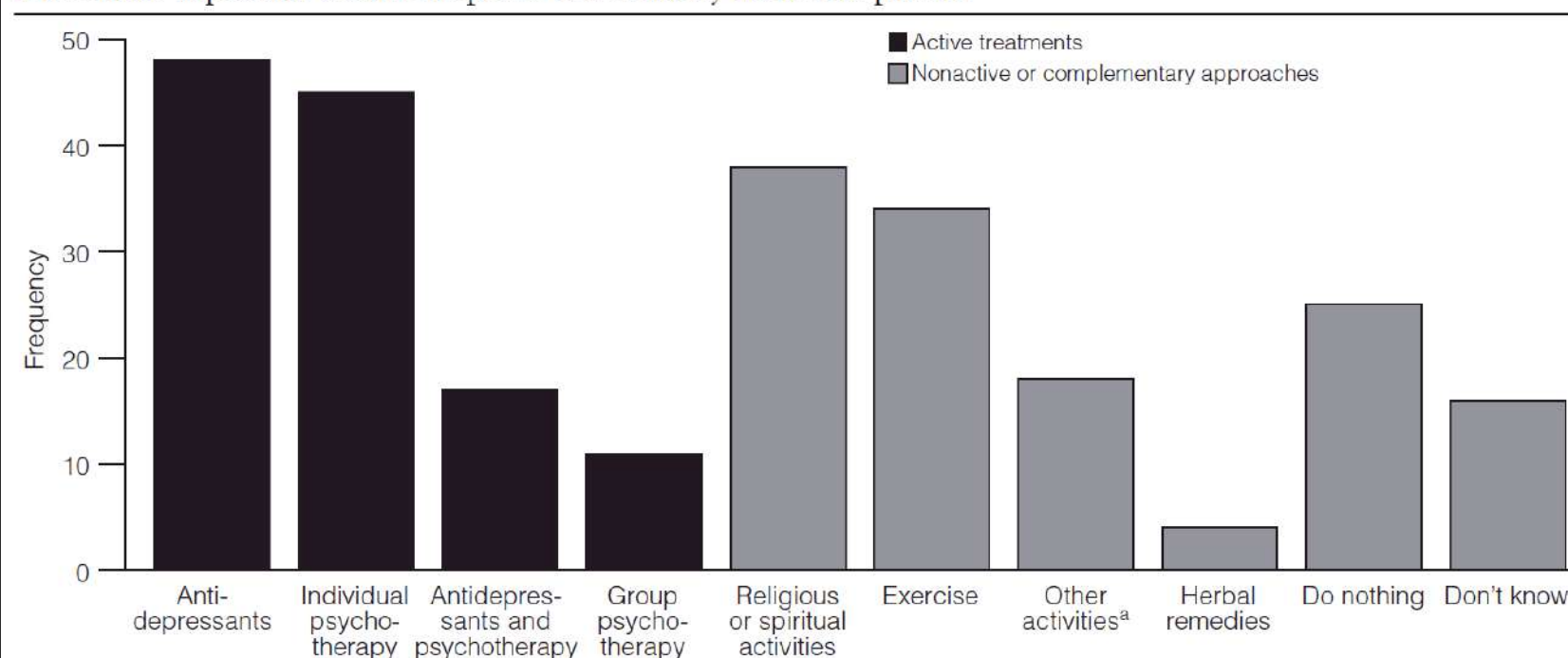
Mark I. Weinberger, Ph.D., M.P.H.

Jo Anne Sirey, Ph.D.

Barnett S. Meyers, M.D.

Martha L. Bruce, Ph.D., M.P.H.

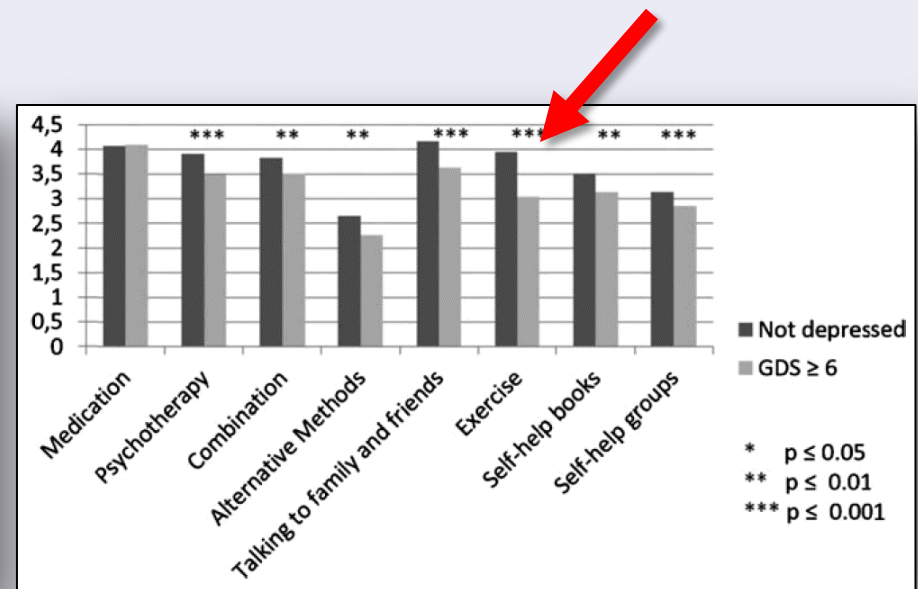
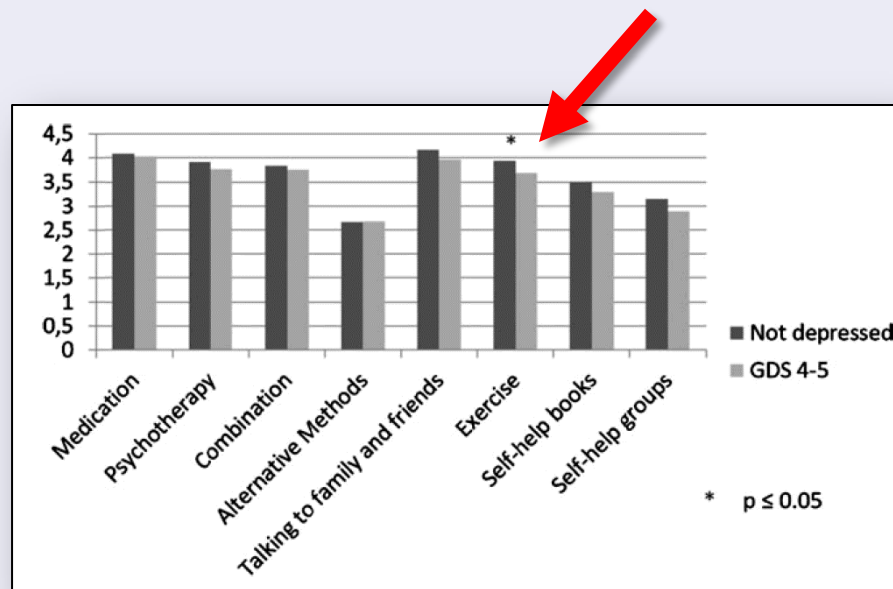
First-choice depression treatment options of 256 elderly home care patients



^a For example, talk with friends, deal with on own, meditation, or alcohol use

Treatment preferences for depression in the elderly

Claudia Luck-Sikorski,^{1,2} Janine Stein,¹ Katharina Heilmann,³ Wolfgang Maier,³ Hanna Kaduszkiewicz,⁴ Martin Scherer,⁵ Siegfried Weyerer,⁶ Jochen Werle,⁶ Birgitt Wiese,⁷ Lilia Moor,⁷ Jens-Oliver Bock,⁸ Hans-Helmut König⁸ and Steffi G Riedel-Heller¹



(N = 1,230, 75+ years, recruited from primary-care practices in Germany)

General Practitioners' beliefs about physical activity for managing depression in primary care

Aidan Searle^{a,*}, Michael Calnan^b, Katrina M. Turner^a, Debbie A. Lawlor^c, John Campbell^d,
Melanie Chalder^e, Glyn Lewis^e

awareness or appraisal of an evidence base. In fact, many GPs were not aware of any evidence that would assist their clinical judgement in recommending physical activity to patients presenting with depression.

Antidepressant drugs and the response in the placebo group: the real problem lies in our understanding of the issue

Konstantinos N Fountoulakis¹ and Hans-Jürgen Möller²



The data on the efficacy of exercise and other alternative therapies, are **either negative or do not exist.**

Journal of Psychopharmacology 2014, Vol. 28(2) 106–117

Burning issues in the meta-analysis of pharmaceutical trials for depression

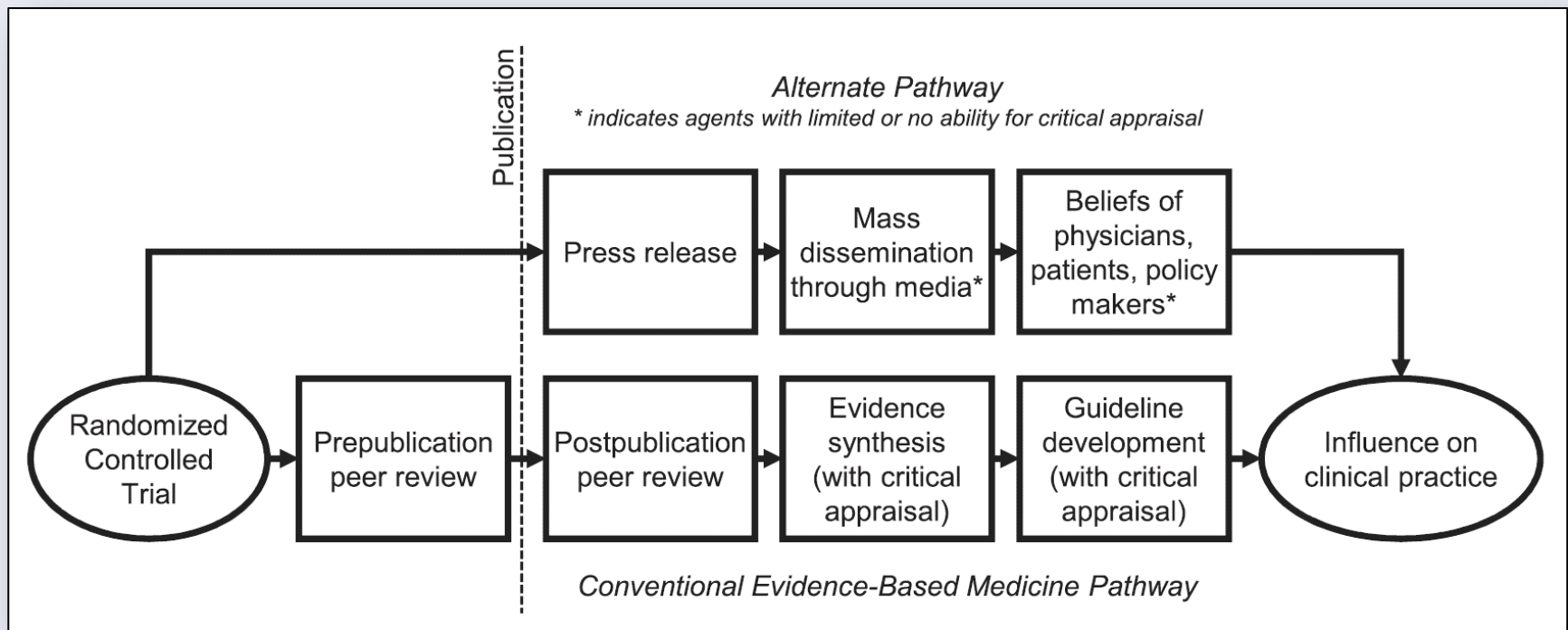
Konstantinos N Fountoulakis, Myrto T Samara and Melina Siamouli

(Cuijpers et al., 2010a, 2010b) while data on the efficacy of exercise, and other alternative therapies, are **either negative or do not exist at all.**

Mass media representations of the evidence as a possible deterrent to recommending exercise for the treatment of depression: Lessons five years after the extraordinary case of TREAD-UK

Pantaleimon Ekkekakis, Mark E. Hartman and Matthew A. Ladwig

“Press-Release-Based Medicine”



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5 June 2012 Last updated at 20:29 ET



Exercise 'no help for depression', research suggests

By Branwen Jeffreys

Health correspondent, BBC News

Eight months of intensive support to exercise fails to bring patients significant benefits

DEPRESSION

Exercise no help in depression

By Rhiannon Smith

A major NHS study on whether exercise can improve depression has failed to show any clinical benefit from increasing activity levels, UK researchers claim.

The NHS health technology assessment failed to show any meaningful improvements after eight months of intensive support to increase activity levels in

361 patients with depression in general practice - raising questions over current treatment guidelines.

The Treating depression with physical activity study looked at the effectiveness of employing a trained physical activity facilitator over eight months to encourage patients in Bristol and Exeter to take more exercise at three face-to-face and 10 tele-



NICE advises exercise schemes for mild to moderate depression

phone sessions, compared with usual GP care.

Rates of physical activity increased by 2.3-fold in the intervention group compared with usual care.

The intervention group did score 'very slightly' lower on the Beck Depression Inventory score at four months compared with the controls, with a non-significant difference of -0.54.

But there was no evidence of clinical benefit, reduced antidepressant use or improved quality of life in the intervention group, and the physical activity intervention was more costly than usual care - costing an average of £220 per person.

NICE guidance currently rec-

Online CPD

Case-based
learning:
depression



pulse-learning.co.uk

would ease their depression.

He said: 'We can be confident in concluding that our physical activity intervention does not benefit outcome in depressive illness when used as an adjunct to usual care.'

'It is unlikely to be a cost-effective intervention.'

Dr David Kessler, a GP in Bris-

Chances of depression recovery

49.6%

Exercise group

45.1%

Usual care group

Source: *Health Technol Assess* 2012;16:1-164

Exercise to treat depression

Does not seem to benefit patients in clinical settings who receive good standard care

Amanda Daley senior lecturer in health psychology, Kate Jolly professor of public health

What should doctors advise their patients who present with depression? Within a clinical setting, for patients who are well managed on usual drugs or psychological treatments (or both), advice and support to be physically active does not seem to offer additional benefit and should not be given as standard. Indeed, recommending exercise to very depressed patients may worsen any thoughts of “failure” if they are unable to comply with the recommendation. However, positive results from trials



Physical activity as a treatment for depressed adults

GE Mead

Professor of Stroke and Elderly Care Medicine, University of Edinburgh Edinburgh, UK



Based on the results of this clinical trial, clinicians should not advise people with depression that physical activity will increase their chances of recovering from depression.

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Exercise proves to be ineffective against care home...

Exercise proves to be ineffective against care home depression

Researchers at the University of Warwick and Queen Mary, University of London have shown that exercise is not effective in reducing burden of depression among elderly care home residents.

Exercise is a low risk intervention that can improve mental health but the findings of a National Institute for Health Research Health Technology Assessment Programme study, published in *The Lancet*, conclude that there is a requirement for alternative approaches to reduce the burden of depression in frail, very elderly, care home residents.



POLITIKEN

Common perception that exercise works against depression, is wrong.

For years, doctors and other professionals advised people suffering from depression to exercise. A simple Google search on the words 'exercise' and 'depression' also leads to the countless repetitions of the mantra that physical exercise helps to make depressed healthy.

But it is not true.



Dr Jesper Krogh



**So, what
should the path
forward be?**

- 1. Antidepressants are not going anywhere, so exercise should be promoted as (a) augmentation therapy and (b) a “stop-gap” measure.**
- 2. Anti-exercise bias in the research literature and the press is only just beginning, and should be met with an organized, rapid, and relentless response.**

Physical exercise for late-life major depression

M. Belvederi Murri, M. Amore, M. Menchetti, G. Toni, F. Neviani, M. Cerri, M. B. L. Rocchi, D. Zocchi, L. Bagnoli, E. Tam, A. Buffa, S. Ferrara, M. Neri, G. S. Alexopoulos, S. Zanetidou and the Safety and Efficacy of Exercise for Depression in Seniors (SEEDS) Study Group

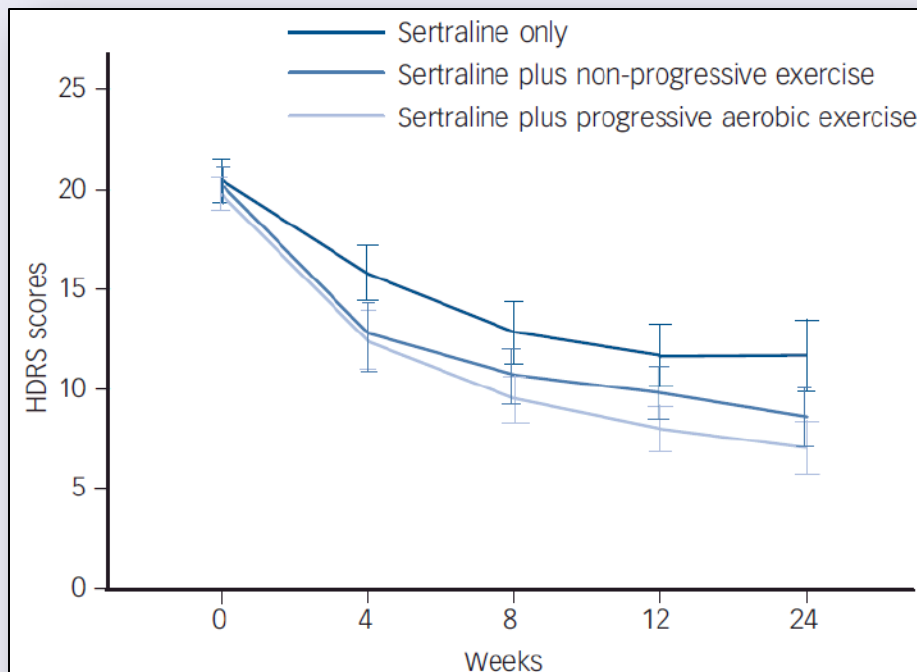


Fig. 3 Unadjusted mean scores (with 95% confidence intervals) on the Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (HRSD) over time.

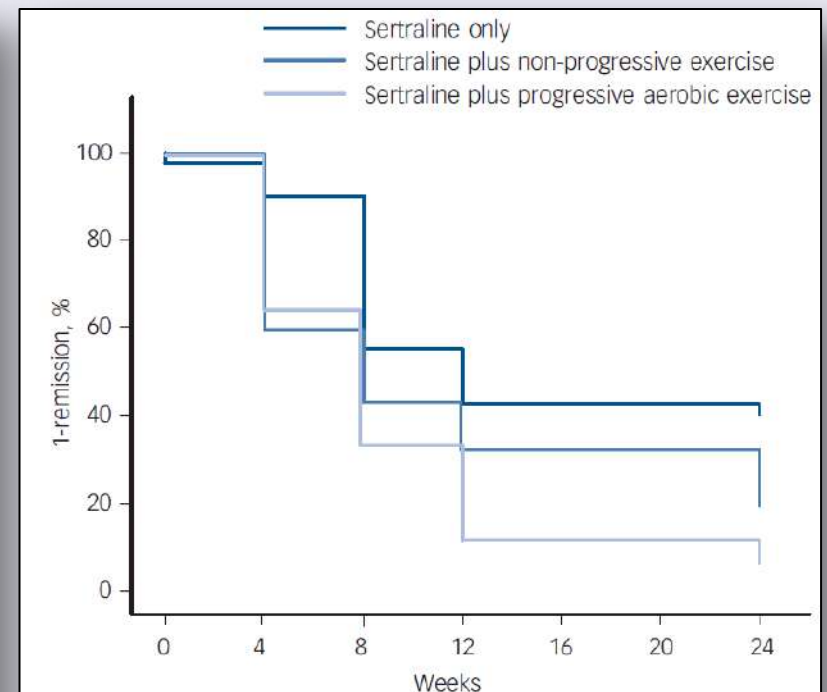
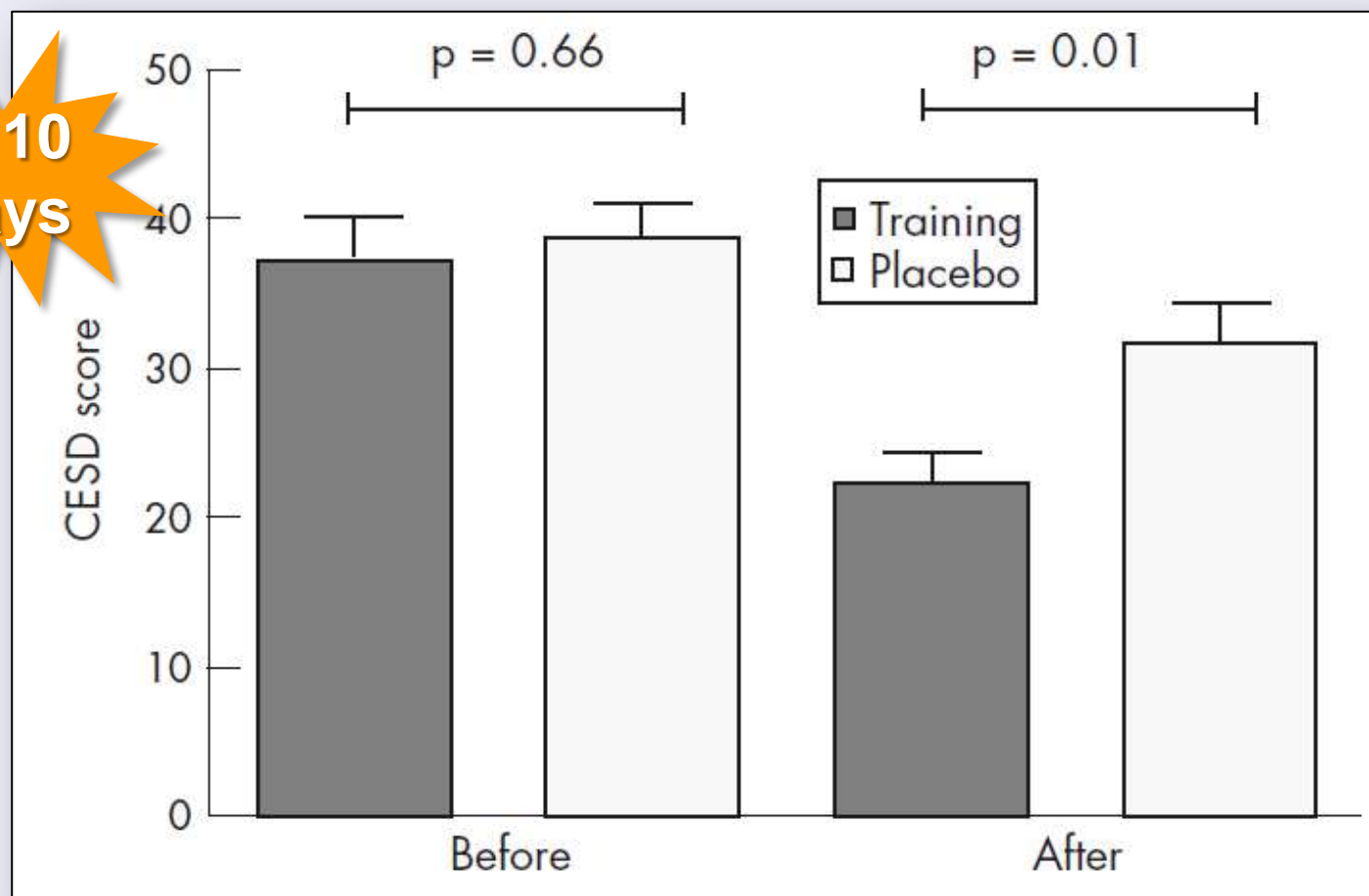


Fig. 2 Kaplan-Meier survival curves for remission of depression according to intervention group.

A randomised, controlled study on the effects of a short-term endurance training programme in patients with major depression

K Knubben, F M Reischies, M Adli, P Schlattmann, M Bauer, F Dimeo

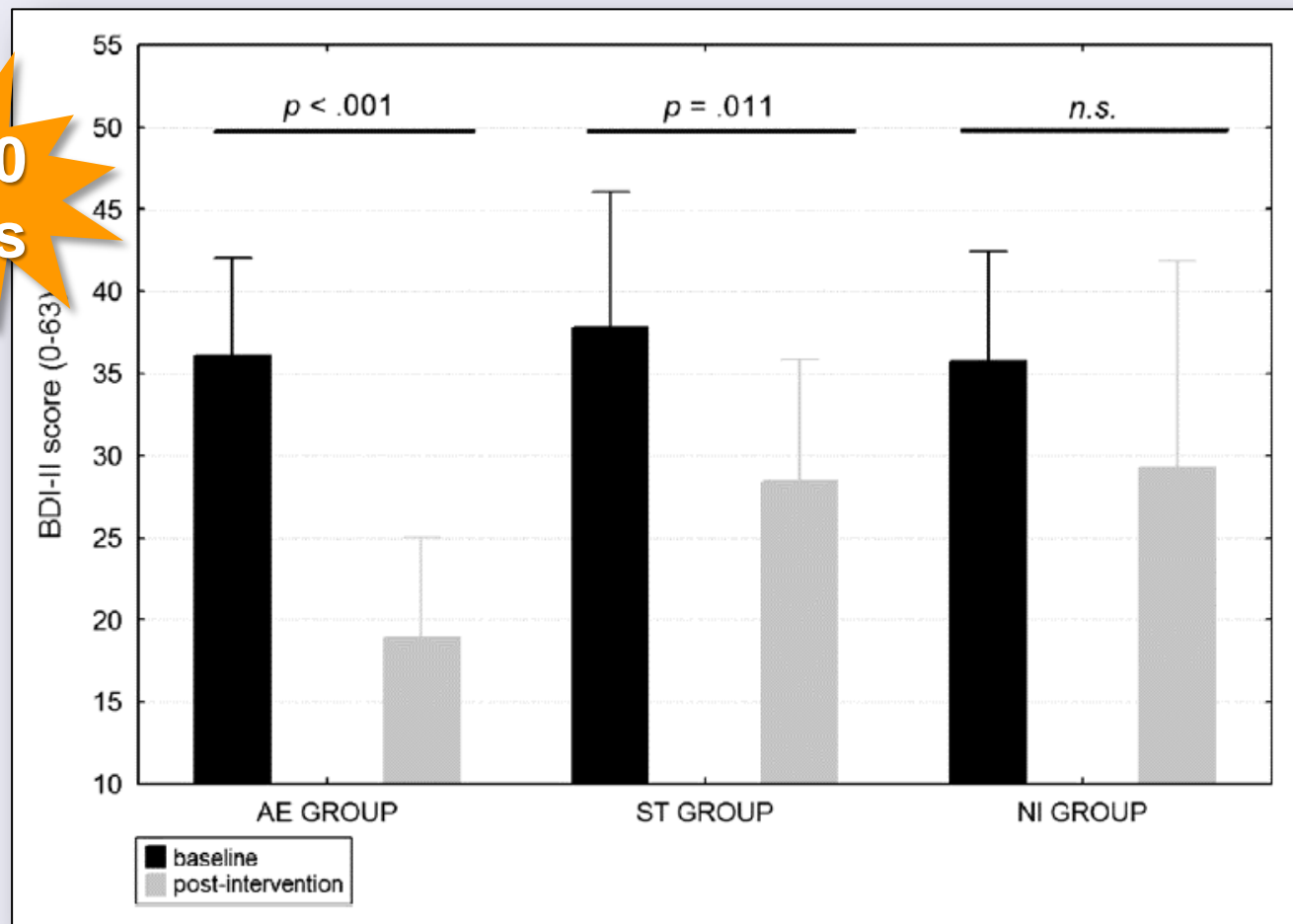
In 10 days



Efficacy of exercise as an adjunct treatment for clinically depressed inpatients during the initial stages of antidepressant pharmacotherapy: An open randomized controlled trial

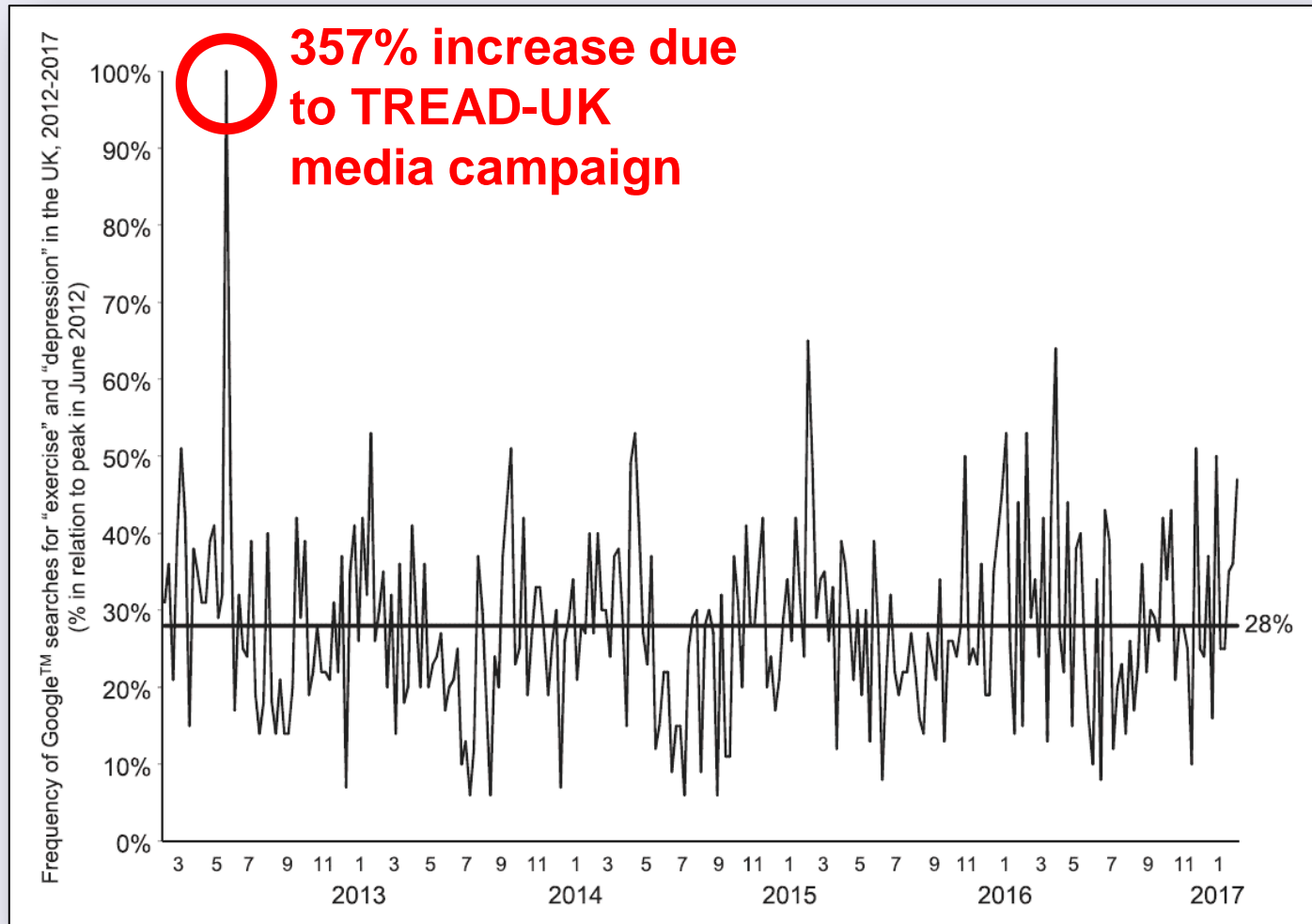
Fabien D. Legrand^{a,*}, Elise M. Neff^b

**In 10
days**



Mass media representations of the evidence as a possible deterrent to recommending exercise for the treatment of depression: Lessons five years after the extraordinary case of TREAD-UK

Panteleimon Ekkekakis, Mark E. Hartman and Matthew A. Ladwig



Jennifer Trueland reports on the fallout from media coverage of research claiming that physical exercise does not benefit patients with depression.

EXERCISE CAUTION



When practice nurse Gillian Bonar heard a news item that suggested exercise did not help treat depression, she felt her heart sink. 'It goes against everything we do and I knew it could make my job harder,' she says.

'You know you are going to get patients saying "This is rubbish. I'm not going to do it," because they have heard the story too.'

The research on exercise was published on BMJ.com on June 6. Conducted in GP practices in Exeter and Bristol, it compared outcomes of two sets of people diagnosed with depression: one group undertook physical activity in addition to care they would usually receive; the other received the usual care only (see box).

The study found that those who exercised did not fare any better in terms of depressive symptoms or use of antidepressants than the group receiving standard care.

There have been many complaints about the media coverage, for example the BBC Online headline 'Exercise "no help for depression", research suggests'. But the study's authors, mostly from the universities of Bristol and

Exeter and Peninsula of Medicine and Dentistry in Plymouth, make it clear: 'Clinicians and makers should alert patients that advice that physical activity will increase chances of recovery.'

The study has inspired a number of 'rapid response' academic papers – time of writing and not necessarily negative. The research media reporting has fuelled debate on patients' knowledge of mental health charities.

Motivational advice
So are the nurses who patients to take up exercise wasting their time? Should they do it at all? Ms Bonar fears – the idea of taking physical

'I would be disappointed if health professionals say by what they read in the media that they should not take exercise, then as healthcare professionals to talk to them about exercise themselves, care of themselves. It is important to them, motivates them, and with them to capture on that motivation.'

The study involved randomising people to where some received treatment and others plus a physical exercise programme, Mr Hulatt

When practice nurse Gillian Bonar heard a news item that suggested exercise did not help treat depression, she felt her heart sink. 'It goes against everything we do and I knew it could make my job harder,' she says.

'You know you are going to get patients saying "This is rubbish. I'm not going to do it," because they have heard the story too.'

SUMMARY

A recent study into the effects of structured physical exercise for people diagnosed with depression claimed that it did not help. The findings attracted huge media coverage that may have made it harder to persuade patients with depression to take exercise.

Author

Jennifer Trueland is a freelance journalist

Thank you!



<http://Ekkekakis.org>



@Ekkekakis

