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Certain antidepressants may cause more weight gain over 2 years

Key takeaways:

- Weight gain is a concern for many patients who take antidepressants.
- Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors, and mirtazapine may cause more weight gain.

DALLAS — Initiation and continued use of certain antidepressants may cause more weight gain over 2 years, according to research presented at ObesityWeek.

Results of a new study showed that patients taking selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), and mirtazapine gained more weight over 2 years than those who used tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs), serotonin modulators and bupropion.



Continued use of some types of antidepressants are associated with weight gain at 2 years. *Image: Adobe Stock*

“[Weight gain is a concern](#) among patients taking antidepressants and a frequently cited reason for nonadherence,” Joshua Petimar, ScD, faculty member in the department of population medicine at the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute at Harvard Medical School, said during a presentation. “However, few studies compare medication-induced weight change across antidepressants.”

Petimar and researchers analyzed electronic health record data from 234,618 patients aged 20 to 65 years across eight U.S. health systems. Patients were newly prescribed one of six antidepressants from 2010 to 2019. Investigators evaluated weight change at 6, 12 and 24 months.

The average [weight change](#) was an increase of 2.38 kg for patients taking SSRIs (95% CI, 1.84–2.99), 2.01 kg for SNRIs (95% CI, 0.64–3.61) and 3.91 kg for mirtazapine (95% CI, 1.03–6.93). The researchers reported no significant change in weight over time for TCAs, serotonin modulators or bupropion.

Compared with SSRIs, the researchers estimated similar weight gain for SNRIs and mirtazapine, but less gain for TCAs, serotonin modulators and bupropion. These patterns were similar for 6- and 12-month weight change and between men and women, according to the results.

“These findings may help clinicians make decisions that prevent weight gain and improve overall medication adherence,” Petimar said.

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Sources/Disclosures

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Source: Petimar J, et al. Oral-043. Presented at: ObesityWeek; Oct. 14-17, 2023; Dallas.

Disclosures: Petimar reports no relevant financial disclosures.

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