

Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services

Drug Information Sheet: **SSRI Antidepressants**

fluoxetine (Prozac)

paroxetine (Paxil)

citalopram (Celexa)

sertraline (Zoloft)

fluvoxamine (Luvox)

escitalopram (Lexapro)

Other: _____

The serotonin selective reuptake inhibitors (SSRI) are used in the treatment of depression, and can improve overall mood, ability to concentrate, sleep and eating patterns, and physical activity. In addition, these agents may be useful in anxiety disorders.

Estimates are that eight or nine out of every ten patients with depression can be helped by currently available antidepressant medications.

All classes of antidepressants are effective, although some may be better than others for certain patients. That is, one class of medication may work particularly well for one person, while another person may have more success with a medication from a different class.

Like any medication, these antidepressant medications can have some side effects:

Common

anxiety/nervousness*

headache

insomnia*

nausea*

diarrhea

* usually for a few days

Less Common

decreased appetite

decreased sex drive

drowsiness

restlessness/agitation

discontinuation syndrome

Rare

dizziness

tremor

pressured speech

hyperactivity

agitation

Antidepressant medications work gradually, and may take up to several weeks to reach their full effect. Don't lose patience; it will take time before you will feel better.

Remember, these medications must be taken regularly to have their full beneficial effect.