EFFICACY OF ANTIDEPRESSANT AND PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC TREATMENTS IN CHILD AND ADULT DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

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Depressive and anxiety disorders are prevalent psychiatric disorders that often start early in life. Heterotypic association between depression and anxiety has been well documented, with anxiety typically preceding depression in childhood and adolescence, while a more complex pattern of co-occurrence has been described for adult-onset illness. Even when starting early in life, depression and anxiety disorders are associated with poor outcomes, including not only psychiatric, social and vocational outcomes, but also development of physical problems. Although remission rates are high, in most cases episodes tend to recur, with increasing severity with every recurrence.

Identification and treatment of these conditions, therefore, is of outmost importance regardless their age of onset. However, therapeutic approaches must take into account the effect of development in their clinical presentation, the differential efficacy of the therapeutic approaches, and the adverse effects profile.

Current treatment algorithms for depressive and anxiety disorders include psychotherapeutic and psychopharmachological approaches and their combination. Although up until recently most treatment evidence came from adult studies, recent developments have increased knowledge on efficacy of interventions for younger populations. Treatment effects in children and adolescents are lower than in adults, partially due to the high placebo effect in youth. This presentation will provide an overview of the current approach to the treatment of depression and anxiety. Specificity of treatment at early ages will be stressed out. New promising treatments and their potential utility will be also discussed.