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EMTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, DEPRESSION, AND ANTIDEPRESSANTS

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Aims: Emotional intelligence is the measure of the comprehension of one's emotional state and the capability to manage emotions, to recognize emotions in others and to react to those emotions appropriately (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

In previous studies a strong correlation was found between low emotional intelligence and depression. (e.g., Berrocal, Alcaide, Extremera, & Pizarro, 2006).

Since antidepressants attempt to solve depression by numbing patients' emotions and making the emotions more controllable (Arce et al, 2008; Davison, 2005), it was our hypothesis that antidepressants will lower emotional intelligence.

Method: A package of questionnaires was distributed to 195 undergraduate students. Included in the package was a questionnaire asking subjects whether depressed, and were they taking antidepressants. Also included were the SCL-90 used to assess emotional distress (Derogatis, 1985), the Beck Depression Inventory used to assess level of depression (Beck, 1981), and the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale used to evaluate level of emotional intelligence.

Results: The results not only agreed with the findings of previous research linking low levels of emotional intelligence to depression, but also supported the hypothesis that the use of antidepressants would be linked to lower levels of emotional intelligence ($r(191) = -.158, p < .029$) This is a powerful finding, considering that the sample size was rather small. Only about 15% of the sample reported being prescribed antidepressants to treat their depression.

Conclusions: The results of this study suggest that taking antidepressants as a form of treatment for depression might impact negatively on patients' ability to handle their emotions.