AETIOLOGY

Forensic database study suggests selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors do not increase the risk of suicide in people taking antidepressants


Q Do selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors increase the risk of suicide in people taking antidepressants?

METHODS

Design: Case control study.

Follow up period: Eight years.


People: 4949 people who died from suspected unnatural causes, and found to be taking antidepressants on forensic screening. Cases were people who had taken antidepressants who had committed suicide, and controls were people taking antidepressants who were judged to have died from natural causes or an accident after forensic investigation.

Risk factors: Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs).

Outcomes: Suicide.

MAIN RESULTS

In people taking antidepressants, SSRI use was no more common among people who had committed suicide than among those who had died from natural causes or an accident (OR 0.83, 99% CI 0.77 to 0.90).

CONCLUSIONS

SSRIs do not appear to increase the risk of suicide in people taking antidepressants.

NOTES

The choice of prescribed antidepressant varies depending on the severity of depression, which may confound the effect of each drug on the rate of suicide.

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