

# SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

Media contact: Ann Harrell  
(214) 648-3404  
or email to [ann.harrell@email.swmed.edu](mailto:ann.harrell@email.swmed.edu)

## **UT SOUTHWESTERN RESEARCHERS SAY DRUGS AND PSYCHOTHERAPY PROVE BEST TREATMENT FOR CHRONIC DEPRESSION**

DALLAS—Major new findings show that a combination of drug treatment and psychotherapy is overwhelmingly more effective than either medication or therapy alone for treating chronic depression, UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas researchers Drs. John Rush and Madhukar Trivedi reported today.

The two psychiatrists are part of a national team that announced its findings in the Serzone Chronic Depression Study at a press conference at the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in Washington, D.C. Both UT Southwestern researchers are authors of the reported abstract.

Results for the first 12 weeks of the 80-week study of 681 patients who had been depressed for at least two years showed that a combination of nefazodone hydrochloride (manufactured under the name Serzone) and psychotherapy produced an 85 percent positive response while medication alone led to a 55 percent positive response. Psychotherapy alone was 52 percent effective.

Rush also said the combination treatment produced the highest response and remission rates for any depression study ever reported. The study showed that both medication and the combination of medication and psychotherapy led to positive responses earlier than psychotherapy alone, while the combination of the two led to higher remission rates.

Rush, a professor of psychiatry and an internationally recognized depression researcher, is vice chairman for research for the Department of Psychiatry.

“We are very excited about these findings,” said Trivedi, an associate professor of psychiatry. “The extremely large differences in response rates after only 12 weeks is truly astonishing. This is positive proof about the kind of treatment we should be using with our chronically depressed patients. We hope it will give us ammunition in our battles with the insurance companies about treatment payments for patients.”

(MORE)

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL CENTER AT DALLAS  
Southwestern Medical School • Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences • Southwestern Allied Health Sciences School  
Affiliated teaching hospitals and outpatient clinics

Office of News and Public Information • 5323 Harry Hines Blvd., Dallas TX 75235-9060 • Telephone (214) 648-3404 • FAX (214) 648-9119

## CHRONIC DEPRESSION-2

Trivedi is principal investigator of the UT Southwestern segment of the study.

Trivedi said that nefazodone is a serotonin re-uptake inhibitor, the most commonly used class of drugs for treating depression. This study found nefazodone was more effective than psychotherapy for reducing relapse. The psychotherapy used in the study was a type of cognitive therapy.

A study released last week by UT Southwestern psychiatric researchers found that atypical depression, whether chronic or not, was effectively treated with either monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitors or cognitive therapy alone. The central feature of atypical depression is that the patient's mood brightens when positive events occur. They may also gain weight and sleep long hours. Most depressed people, in contrast, report loss of appetite and insomnia and remain depressed throughout the illness. This study, published in *The Archives of General Psychiatry*, used a different class of antidepressant and a different style of cognitive therapy than the national study reported today.

Dr. Martin B. Keller, chairman of psychiatry and human behavior at Brown University School of Medicine, headed the national chronic depression study. Bristol-Myers Squibb Co., manufacturer of Serzone, funded the study.

###

This news release is available on our World Wide Web home page at  
[http://www.swmed.edu/home\\_pages/news/](http://www.swmed.edu/home_pages/news/)

To automatically receive news releases from UT Southwestern via e-mail, send a message to  
UTSWNEWS-REQUEST@listserv.swmed.edu. Leave the subject line blank and in the text box, type  
SUB UTSWNEWS

5/24/99