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MANAGEMENT OF DEPRESSION WITH AGOMELATINE: A DIFFERENT PERCEPTION

G. Hajak

Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Social Foundation Bamberg and University of Regensburg, Regensburg, Germany

Agomelatine is a completely new approach to the treatment of depression thanks to its innovative mode of action. Acting as melatonergic agonist and 5-HT_{2C} antagonist, it provides depressed patients with a distinctive antidepressant efficacy that perfectly suits patients' needs and addresses all symptoms at each step of depression. Two years after the first launch in Europe, now is the time for an update from doctors and patients alike.

The patient/doctor relation is key when initiating depression treatment, because patients are reluctant to start, fearing withdrawal symptoms, serious unwanted side effects, and 'addiction'. It is important therefore that they understand that agomelatine has none of these effects.

The benefits perceived by patients right from the first days of treatment are influential, because patients are reluctant to continue with classic antidepressants (delayed onset of perceived benefit, early side effects). The early improvement reported by patients on agomelatine supplements data on clinical benefits seen in clinical trials from the first week versus venlafaxine (CGI-I, rate of response, daytime alertness, feeling good) and after two weeks versus sertraline (twice as many HAM-D responders to agomelatine as to sertraline).

Finally, patients are reluctant to maintain antidepressant treatment because of later side effects (weight gain, sexual dysfunction, emotional blunting). Patients on agomelatine confirm the absence of the classic side effects of antidepressants and are more likely to continue treatment than they are with other drugs. Both the antidepressant efficacy and the tolerability were confirmed in a large non-interventional study in a real-life setting in daily practice.