

Study Says Antidepressant May Calm Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

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New York, NY (AHN)-According to a new trial study, treatment with so-called SSRI antidepressants seems to reduce abdominal symptoms and promote overall well being in people with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

Dr. Jan Tack from University of Leuven in Belgium and colleagues note in the journal Gut, these antidepressants "could be considered in IBS patients who do not respond well enough to a classical treatment approach."

Tack tells Reuters Health, SSRIs are often used in the treatment of IBS "although evidence of their efficacy is scarce."

The investigative team reports, "After three and six weeks of treatment, citalopram significantly improved abdominal pain, bloating, impact of symptoms on daily life, and overall well being compared with placebo."

Citalopram's ability to alleviate several IBS symptoms seems unrelated to its effect on depression or anxiety, because depressed patients were excluded from the study and changes in mood did not correlate with IBS symptom improvement.

Tack and his colleagues tell Reuters, "Citalopram provided symptomatic benefit of rapid onset, was well tolerated, and was not associated with the side effects of tricyclic antidepressants, such as drowsiness or constipation."

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