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Media release

4 February 2005

Treating mild depression

Non-drug options should be considered as first-line therapy for all cases of mild depression. Appropriate strategies for treating mild depression, according to Dr Kelsey Hegarty of the University of Melbourne writing in the latest issue of *Australian Prescriber*, are psychological therapies, self-help and exercise programs.

Over the last decade the number of antidepressant medicines prescribed has significantly increased. But, according to Dr Hegarty, there is not a lot of evidence to support their use for mild depression.

Despite the fact that mild depression is commonly managed by general practitioners, there is a lack of evidence about the treatment of minor depression in the primary care setting. Most studies have tended to focus on patients with major depression.

According to Dr Hegarty, general practitioners should discuss with patients the nature of the depression being experienced, the possible treatment options and their effectiveness, and consider non-drug treatments. These include counselling, for example interpersonal therapy, problem solving therapy and cognitive behaviour therapy, and St John's wort.

For further information on targeting depression in primary care, health professionals can visit www.nps.org.au health professional section or call TAIS (Therapeutic Advice and Information Service) on 1300 138 677 Monday to Friday 9am-6pm EST.

For the complete article visit the *Australian Prescriber* website www.australianprescriber.com. *Australian Prescriber* is an independent review providing critical commentary on drugs and therapeutics for health professionals. It is published by National Prescribing Service (NPS), an independent, non-profit organisation funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. NPS works to improve the health of all Australians through Quality Use of Medicines.

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TP Feb.05

***Australian
Prescriber***

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