

Generic SSRIs:

Safe, Effective, and Affordable

When determining which SSRI to prescribe, often drug efficacy, patient tolerance of side effects and cost are principal considerations. Multiple generic SSRIs, which represent the gold standard in this category, are currently available and offer patients effective initial therapy or change in therapy options at an affordable price.

Safe and Effective

Research has shown that there are no significant differences in efficacy among SSRIs.^{1,2} Second generation antidepressants have been proven to relieve symptoms of depression in 55-70 percent of patients who take them. This has been verified through a review of 153 studies (including 123 randomized clinical trials and 15 meta-analyses).

Antidepressants differ significantly in side effects and cost, although there do not appear to be consistent qualitative differences among SSRIs. In general, between 3-16 percent of patients discontinued their SSRI because of side effects. *Comparative studies between SSRIs have not shown a consistent trend of any one SSRI being tolerated better than another.*²

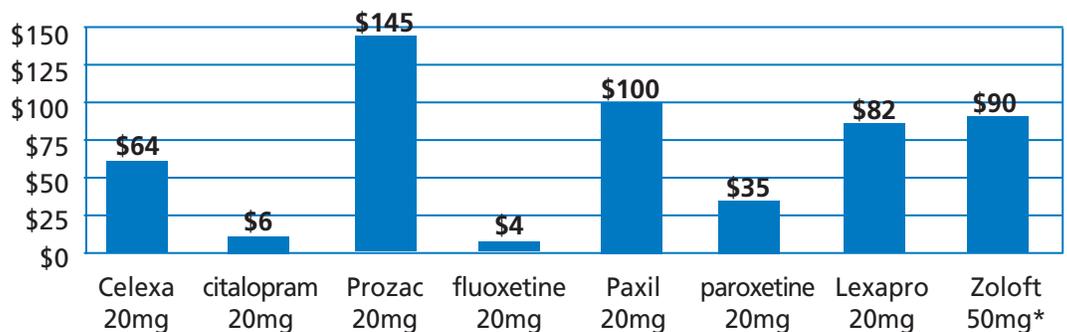
Affordable

Consumer Reports² selected two Best Buy antidepressants (at doses intended for initial treatment) based on effectiveness, safety, side effects, and cost:

- Generic fluoxetine at a dose of either 10mg or 20mg a day
- Generic citalopram at a dose of 20mg a day

A more detailed explanation of the project and specific drug class criteria are available at www.CRBestBuyDrugs.org.

Brand vs. Generic SSRIs Average Cost Per Month[▲]



* Generic Zoloft (sertraline) will be available summer '06.

▲ Average cost/month: 3/06 Medispan (average wholesale price for brands and approximate discounted reimbursement rate for generic and OTC).

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SSRI Indications

Indications	citalopram* (Celexa®)	escitalopram (Lexapro®)	fluoxetine* (Prozac®)	paroxetine* (Paxil®)	sertraline** (Zoloft®)
Bulimia nervosa			■		
Depression	■	■	■	■	■
Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)		■		■	
Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)			■	■	■
Panic disorder			■	■	■
Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD)			■	■	■
Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)				■	■
Social anxiety disorder				■	■

* Currently available generically

** Generic Zoloft (sertraline) will be available summer '06.

*** Fluoxetine and Zoloft are FDA approved for pediatric patients.

Benefit Coverage Requirements

The following information is dependent on the member's prescription drug plan and may not apply to all benefits.

Please note that all new starts on an SSRI will require a trial of a generic SSRI, before we will cover a branded SSRI unless intolerance or ineffectiveness of a generic SSRI exists in your patient's history.

Please note that if your patient has filled a prescription for a generic SSRI in the past, it will appear in our claim system history. However, if your patient has not filled a prescription for one of the generics, and there is a clinical need for your patient to have a brand only option, please complete an exception form and fax it to the FLRx Pharmacy Help Desk at 1-800-956-2397.

If you have any questions about this information, please call the FLRx Drug Information Service line at 1-877-777-2737 or email your questions to myrxconnection@FLRx.com.

References

1. G. Gartlehner, R. Hansen, et. al. Drug Class Review on 2nd Generation Antidepressants, Final Report, March 2006 (<http://www.ohsu.edu/drugeffectiveness/reports>, (Drug Effectiveness Review Project - Oregon Health and Science University).
2. Drugs to Treat Depression: Antidepressants. *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs™*. www.CRBestBuyDrugs.org.

