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Title: Anti-depressants in severe and brittle asthma patients on long term corticosteroids: An observational study

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Body: Introduction: Anxiety and depression is highly prevalent in patients with difficult-to-control asthma. Previous studies have also shown significantly higher depressive symptoms in patients on long term corticosteroids. Objective: The purpose of the study was to measure the effect of antidepressants in brittle asthma patients on long term steroids compared to those not on long term corticosteroids. Methods: We studied patients on the severe and brittle asthma register on long term corticosteroids (n=57) and patients not on long term corticosteroids(n=83). We then made two subgroups of each group one on antidepressants and one not on antidepressants. The HADS-D(Hospital Anxiety Depression scale-Depression) scores of 2 subgroups on antidepressants(on steroids n=7 and not on steroids n=9) were compared.Both groups had mean age of 40.8 and no significant difference in the mean pre-bronchodilator FEV1 and similar Asthma Control Questionnaire(ACQ) scores. Results:1)Mean HADS-D score of steroid dependant group and non-steroid dependant group were 11.3 and 4.2 respectively(p<0.0001). 2)Mean HADS-D scores were 11.58 and 10.28 in the no antidepressant and antidepressant sub-groups respectively(p=0.93) in the steroid dependant group. Mean ACQ scores were 3.8 and 3.58 respectively (p=0.36). Conclusions: 1)Study confirms level of depressive symptoms are significantly higher in the steroid dependant group in Brittle Asthma. 2) Anti- depressants are less effective in the steroid dependant group after correcting for Age, pre-bronchodilator FEV1 and ACQ scores as measured by the HADS-D scale.