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ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

The interpersonal adverse effects reported by 1,008 users of antidepressants; and the incremental impact of polypharmacy

John Read^{a*}, Aimee Gee^b, Jacob Diggle^b, Helen Butler^b

^aSchool of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ, UK ^bMind, Stratford, London, UK

john@uel.ac.uk a.gee@mind.org.uk j.diggle@mind.org.uk h.butler@mind.org.uk

*Corresponding author. Professor John Read, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ, UK. +44 (0)208 223 4943.

Abstract

Antidepressant drugs are being prescribed at ever increasing rates internationally, despite marginal benefit compared to placebo and a range of adverse effects. Most studies of adverse effects focus on biological phenomena. This article presents the results of an online survey of 1,008 self-selected anti-depressant users in Britain, which asked about five adverse effects in the interpersonal domain. The most commonly reported among participants who took only antidepressants were: Sex Life – 43.7%, Work or Study – 27.0% and Social Life – 23.5%. These rates of interpersonal adverse effects were even higher for the 52% of participants who were also taking one or more other psychiatric drugs. Only about a half (48%) felt they had been given enough information about side effects by the prescriber. Those initially prescribed medication by a psychiatrist were more likely to be on several types of drugs and reported more adverse effects than those whose prescriber was a General Practitioner (GP). Researchers and prescribers are encouraged to pay greater attention to interpersonal adverse effects.

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