

FALSE CONCLUSIONS REGARDING DULOXETINE'S PURPORTED EFFICACY IN PAIN AMONG DEPRESSED PATIENTS

Glen I. Spielmans

Department of Psychology, Metropolitan State University, St. Paul, USA

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

A recent narrative review by Mohr et al. (2010) states that duloxetine possesses "consistent analgesic efficacy" in reducing pain among depressed patients. They claim that this finding runs counter to my allegedly "controversial" meta-analysis which found that duloxetine possessed no such analgesic benefits in depression (Spielman 2008). Yet their paper did not contain any statistical analysis of the underlying data; rather, they performed what appears to be an incomplete literature review. My meta-analysis included five placebo-controlled trials of duloxetine for treating pain in depression (Spielman 2008), whereas their more recent paper mentioned only three such trials. So, based on fewer studies and without the benefit of any statistical analysis, Mohr et al. (2010) decreed that duloxetine possesses analgesic properties for depressed patients. My report, based on a meta-analysis of five

controlled trials, found only a very small, non-statistically significant effect for duloxetine. I believe the educated reader can easily ascertain which analysis is more valid. One is left to wonder if the fact that duloxetine's sponsor, Eli Lilly, "supported the work" of the authors had any influence on their incomplete literature review or invalid interpretation of the evidence regarding duloxetine as a treatment for pain in depression.

REFERENCES

1. Mohr P, Bitter I, Svestka J, Seifritz E, Karamustafalioglu O, Koponen H, Sartorius N. Management of depression in the presence of pain symptoms. *Psychiatr Danub* 2010; 22:4-13.
2. Spielman GI. Duloxetine does not reduce painful physical symptoms in depression: A meta-analysis. *Psychother Psychosom* 2008; 77:12-16.

Correspondence:

Glen I. Spielmans, Ph.D., Associate Professor
Department of Psychology, Metropolitan State University
1450 Energy Park Drive, St. Paul, MN 55108, USA
E-mail: glen.spielmans@metrostate.edu