

Psychiatric Medication in Borderline Personality Disorder

- Around **45 RCTs** have been conducted on **medication to treat BPD** (antipsychotics > antidepressants > mood stabilisers > other medications) (1).
- They have usually had **small sample sizes** (<50 patients), **short durations** (mean of 12 weeks), **variable outcome measures**, **infrequent replication** of findings and a **lack of independence** from pharmaceutical companies.
- **All these trials** have been assessed as having a **high risk of bias** and the **evidence quality** they provide is graded either **low or very low**.
- **Pharmaceutical company funded research** is limited in its **quality** and **generalisability** by fears of liability regarding acts like violence or suicide in patients who do / do not receive medications.
- **Polypharmacy** is very common in patients with BPD. In some studies, 56% were taking ≥ 3 drugs, and 30% ≥ 4 drugs. The number of drugs being used is recognised as inversely proportional to improvement.
- Polypharmacy is associated with **multiple and cumulative side-effects**, and there have been **no clear benefits** noted from **augmentation** of medications in BPD.
- Trials **have been conducted** comparing such augmentations for any observed advantage (2).
- **No medication** has shown **any promise** for the 'core (BPD) symptoms of chronic feelings of **emptiness**, **identity** disturbance and **abandonment**' (3)

Sources:

1. Stoffers-Winterling JM, Storebø OJ, Ribeiro JP, Kongerslev MT, Völlm BA, Mattivi JT, et al. Pharmacological interventions for people with borderline personality disorder. Cochrane Database Syst Rev [Internet]. 2022 [cited 2022 Dec 28];(11). Available from: <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD012956.pub2/full> 2. Zanarini MC, Frankenburg FR, Parachini EA. A preliminary, randomized trial of fluoxetine, olanzapine, and the olanzapine-fluoxetine combination in women with borderline personality disorder. J Clin Psychiatry. 2004 Jul;65(7):903-7. 3. Stoffers J, Völlm BA, Rucker G, Timmer A, Huband N, Lieb K. Pharmacological interventions for borderline personality disorder. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2010 Jun 16;(6):CD005653.