

The Use of Ketamine in Conjunction with Antidepressants for Treatment Resistant Depression

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Abstract : Treatment-resistant depression (TRD) is a debilitating mental health disorder for which there are very few available treatment options. Current research suggests that ketamine may be a safe and effective option for the treatment of TRD. Research utilizing a review of the literature was conducted to determine if ketamine in conjunction with antidepressants is more effective than antidepressants alone in the treatment of TRD. The literature consists of ten journal articles which include quantitative studies based on primary research. A critique of the literature was done to determine whether the findings are reliable, critiquing elements influencing the believability and robustness of the research. The research was based on the neuroplasticity theory of depression, hypothesizing that ketamine, in conjunction with antidepressants, will be more effective than antidepressants alone as they have different mechanisms of action. All the studies except one found ketamine in conjunction with antidepressants to be a more effective treatment than antidepressants alone in the treatment of TRD. Results of the studies indicate that ketamine is effective in treating TRD at various doses, settings, and routes of administration. Further research is necessary, though, to further explore and confirm the findings. Several gaps in literature were identified, including the optimal dose of ketamine, its long-term efficacy and safety, and effects of ketamine in repeated doses. The research topic is highly significant to advanced practice nursing, as based on the findings, ketamine can be utilized as a safe and effective treatment for TRD.

Keywords : ketamine, major depressive disorder, treatment-resistant depression, treatment

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