



# Psychopharmacology TIDBITS

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**-TB- The New Celexa.** Forest Laboratories will soon be marketing a new antidepressant called *Lexapro* (escitalopram oxalate). If the generic name escitalopram sounds familiar, that is because citalopram has been marketed as *Celexa* for several years. What's the difference? While *Celexa* is a racemic mixture of both S- and R- isomers, *Lexapro* contains only the S-(+)-enantiomer. The S-isomer is reported to be the active isomer with antidepressant activity. There may or may not be an advantage to using the newer SSRI. In clinical trials, it appears that *Lexapro* doses are smaller and that onset of efficacy may occur within 1 to 2 weeks. To date, there are no studies comparing *Lexapro* to SSRIs other than *Celexa*. The new drug is supposed to be released sometime this summer.

**-TB- Injectable Risperdal and Geodon.** The FDA rejected an application to approve a long-acting injectable form of *Risperdal* (risperidone) indicated for the management of schizophrenia. The injectable form of the drug (*Risperdal Consta*) would be administered every 2 weeks. Johnson & Johnson plans to work with the FDA to address issues raised. Those issues were not released by the manufacturer.

Meanwhile, the FDA has approved *Geodon IM* for injection (ziprasidone mesylate) for the rapid control of agitated behavior and psychotic symptoms such as delusions and hallucinations in patients with acute schizophrenic exacerbations. This approval makes the medication the first atypical antipsychotic approved for intramuscular (IM) use in the US. Approval is based on 2 studies of more than 175 patients. *Geodon* demonstrated efficacy in rapidly reducing agitation and improving psychotic symptoms, with statistical improvement seen within 30 minutes. The most common side effects were sleeplessness, nausea, and headache.

**-TB- The Difference a Generic Can Make.** The cost of **generic fluoxetine** (Prozac) has dropped significantly and is as inexpensive as \$0.10 per dose. Compared to other SSRIs or other newer antidepressants which can cost up to approximately \$100 per month, generic fluoxetine is an attractive choice for the treatment of depression. (Costs are based on AWP-11% or MAC)

DRUG	DOSE	COST/MONTH
fluoxetine, generic	20 mg qd	\$3
<i>Zoloft</i>	50 mg qd	\$67
<i>Celexa</i>	40 mg qd	\$63
<i>Effexor</i>	37.5 mg bid	\$76
<i>Remeron</i>	45 mg qd	\$70
<i>Wellbutrin SR</i>	150 mg bid	\$119