

PRESS RELEASE

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New University of Oxford Survey on the Side Effects of Antidepressants in Adults (SUSANA)

Oxford Health's Biomedical Research Centre is launching a large-scale international survey today (24th May) to gather information about the side effects of antidepressants. Aimed at both patients and prescribers, results of the survey will be used to develop personalised treatment for depression in real-world clinical settings.

Nearly 71 million prescriptions for antidepressants were given out in the UK in 2018 – nearly twice as many as ten years ago.* Antidepressants are an effective treatment for depression** but their side effects can be a reason for people to stop taking their prescribed medication.

Dr Anneka Tomlinson, Clinician and Senior Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Oxford, explains:

"Side effects of antidepressants can be extremely debilitating and are one of the main reasons that people stop taking the drugs. It is crucial that we understand which side effects are the most troublesome and intolerable to patients and which antidepressants cause these specific side effects."

What is the SUSANA survey?

The SUSANA survey is a large-scale, international, online survey of antidepressant side effects funded by the National Institute for Health Research. The survey will increase our understanding of which side effects matter most to patients and their doctors. This data will contribute to the development of a clinical decision-making tool to be used in the NHS and will help ensure patients receive the medication they are best able to tolerate.

Professor Andrea Cipriani, NIHR Research Professor, University of Oxford, and Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist at Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, who has co-ordinated the survey said:

"It has taken us two years of planning, but we are very excited to launch SUSANA, an ambitious and clinically-oriented project. SUSANA is an easy-to-complete international survey (in three different languages) designed with input from academic researchers, psychiatrists, psychologists, patients, carers and social media experts/influencers to better understand what really matters to patients and clinicians in terms of side effects from short and long-term treatment with antidepressants."

Who can take part in the survey?

The SUSANA survey will launch on 24th May 2019 and is aimed at all adult patients (aged over 18), with a history of depression who are taking or have taken antidepressant medication. The survey is also aimed at professionals involved in prescribing antidepressants including doctors, GPs and nurse and pharmacist prescribers. The survey can be found here <https://elfi.sh/SUSANAsurvey>

Professor Cipriani continues *"This is going to be the largest and most comprehensive survey ever carried out in this field. We are going to collect views and preferences from thousands of people across the world to rank the side effects of antidepressants and be able to provide the clinical information that people want (not just the information that is available in the scientific literature)."*

SUSANA will run for at least a month and results from the survey will be analysed by independent statisticians using the latest techniques for advanced data analysis.

* <https://www.bmj.com/content/364/bmj.l1508.full>

** <https://oxfordhealthbrc.nihr.ac.uk/?s=antidepressants>

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- The SUSANA survey launches on 24th May 2019 and aims to reach a large and diverse group of patients and prescribers. It will be available online here elfi.sh/SUSANAsurvey
- The survey will be supported by a social media campaign with the hashtag #SUSANAsurvey and a series of blogs.
- Podcasts relating to the project can be found here <https://soundcloud.com/national-elf-service/sets/susana-survey>
- SUSANA is part of a larger project funded by the National Institute of Health Research looking at how well tolerated antidepressants are when they are used in treating depression
- SUSANA is led by an international team of researchers, scientists and clinicians, coordinated by [Andrea Cipriani](#) (NIHR Research Professor at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford, and Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist at Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust) in collaboration with The Mental Elf.
- Key Oxford Health and University of Oxford contacts for the research:
 - Professor Andrea Cipriani, NIHR Research Professor, University of Oxford, andrea.cipriani@psych.ox.ac.uk
 - Dr Anneka Tomlinson, Clinician and Senior Postdoctoral Researcher, anneka.tomlinson@psych.ox.ac.uk

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Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT) Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT) provides physical, mental health and social care for people of all ages across Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Swindon, Wiltshire, Bath and North East Somerset. Our services are delivered at community bases, hospitals, clinics and people's homes. We focus on delivering care as close to home as possible.

As a leading teaching, training and research trust, we have close links to Oxford and Oxford

Brookes, Buckinghamshire, Reading and Bath universities. We are part of the Oxford Academic Health Science Centre, working closely with our university colleagues to translate their findings into clinical care as quickly as possible, enabling people using our services to benefit from the latest advances in healthcare.

We host the NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre with Oxford University, and aim to bring the best science to the complex problems of mental disorders and dementia. We also host the Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC) Oxford; a partnership between universities, healthcare commissioners and providers, charities and industry targeting health and social care problems in Oxfordshire and the Thames Valley.
www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is the nation's largest funder of health and care research. The NIHR:

- Funds, supports and delivers high quality research that benefits the NHS, public health and social care
- Engages and involves patients, carers and the public in order to improve the reach, quality and impact of research
- Attracts, trains and supports the best researchers to tackle the complex health and care challenges of the future
- Invests in world-class infrastructure and a skilled delivery workforce to translate discoveries into improved treatments and services
- Partners with other public funders, charities and industry to maximise the value of research to patients and the economy

The NIHR was established in 2006 to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research, and is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care. In addition to its national role, the NIHR supports applied health research for the direct and primary benefit of people in low- and middle-income countries, using UK aid from the UK government.

This work uses data provided by patients and collected by the NHS as part of their care and support and would not have been possible without access to this data. The NIHR recognises and values the role of patient data, securely accessed and stored, both in underpinning and leading to improvements in research and care www.nihr.ac.uk/patientdata