



## Watch For Suicidal Risk Among Kids Who Are On SSRIs

Children being treated for depression with selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors may be at increased risk for suicidal thoughts and actions, according to an FDA advisory committee. As a result, the FDA has issued a stronger warning to doctors who prescribe SSRIs for children.

Although fluoxetine (Prozac) is currently the only SSRI approved to treat depression in children, many physicians treat kids with other SSRIs that are approved only for adults.

The advisory committee made its recommendation after reviewing

data from more than 20 trials involving the treatment of children with antidepressants. Among the 4,000 children who participated in the trials, nearly 110 experienced one or more possible suicide-related behaviors.

The conclusions of the committee were similar to those found by British health authorities last year that resulted in a warning letter sent to British physicians.

American Healthline. "FDA: Panel recommends stronger warnings for SSRIs." 2004. [www.nationaljournal.com/pubs/healthline](http://www.nationaljournal.com/pubs/healthline) (5 Apr. 2004).

U.S. Food and Drug Administration. "FDA issues public health advisory entitled: Reports of suicidality in pediatric patients being treated with antidepressant medications for major depressive disorder (MDD)." 2003. [www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/ANSWERS/2003/ANS01256.html](http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/ANSWERS/2003/ANS01256.html) (5 Apr. 2004).

### Error Watch

## Better Communication May Reduce Med Errors In The Home

Taking the wrong dose of a medication or forgetting to take a prescription altogether are the most common types of drug errors that occur in the home, according to reports submitted to the U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP).

Some 21% of patients reported communication problems and 19% reported a lack of knowledge as recurring causes of error. Another cause: a lack of patient-specific labeling on drug samples provided by doctors' offices. Patients report that these samples were typically distributed without information about the drug's use, side effects, and warnings.

In many cases, when it came to taking medicine at home, patients said they did not understand how to take their meds, misunderstood abbreviations used for dosing, or didn't ask questions when the appearance of the product or instructions on refilled medications differed from the original prescription.

To minimize the risk of errors at home, healthcare professionals—including nurses—need to establish better communication and patient counseling processes. To help your patients, encourage them to ask questions when they are taking or being given a medication.

#### THE AUTHORS

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## FDA Strives To Avoid Abuse Of Generic Pain Med

The FDA's approval of two generic forms of oxycodone comes with a plan designed to avoid misuse of the drug used to treat chronic pain associated with cancer and other illnesses.

To minimize the risks that are associated with the use of oxycodone extended-release tablets and other opioids, the FDA has reached an agreement with drug manufacturers to devise risk management plans. The plans will include educating health profession-

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