Illuminating the Black Box: Antidepressants, Youth and Suicide

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Disclosures

“Neither I nor my spouse/partner has a relevant financial relationship with a commercial interest to disclose.”
SUICIDE AND DEPRESSION

- Completed suicide 10-14 year olds
  - Boys 1.6/100,000; Girls 0.6/100,000

- 20% of high school students report suicidal ideation. 10% report suicidal behavior

- Adolescent suicide rate has quadrupled since 1950. Making up 12% of Deaths in Adolescents.

Black Box Warning

– October 2004:

– FDA directed manufacturers of all anti-depressants to include a warning stating that anti-depressants MAY increase the risk of suicidal ideation in behavior in children and adolescents
Increased Suicidal Ideation on anti-depressants?

- results of FDA evaluation of 24 studies
- 2% risk in placebo vs a 4% risk with anti-depressant medication
- Suicidality in these children did not occur by chance alone
SUICIDAL RISK on anti-depressants

- no deaths / no completed suicides

- across ALL studies with 4400 children and adolescents
SUICIDE

- increased risk of suicide with untreated depression
THEORIES

– adolescents treated with anti-depressants may be more depressed to begin with

– so more at risk for suicidal ideation

– suicidal ideation elevated with treatment more than 1 anti-depressant

– bipolar depression

– emerging thought disorder
RECOMMENDATIONS

– children/adolescents treated with anti-depressants should…

– start on low doses

– get a thorough family history

– be closely monitored for
  – worsening depression
  – emergence of suicidal ideation
  – response to treatment
FDA RECOMMENDED MONITORING on anti-depressants

- suggested frequency of check-ins
  - weekly for first 4 weeks
  - bi-weekly for next 4 weeks
  - end of 3 months
  - then at least every 3 months