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FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH PREMATURE DISCONTINUATION OF ANTIDEPRESSANT DRUG TREATMENT IN FRANCE

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Objectives: As practice guidelines recommend to maintain antidepressant treatments for a long duration after improvement of symptoms in order to prevent relapse or recurrence, our objectives were to explore the duration of the antidepressant drug treatment in France and to characterise the antidepressant users with a short duration of treatment.

Methods: An observational retrospective cohort study was conducted in the community-dwelling population 18 year-old and over through claims databases of the public health insurance. A random sample of 34.663 outpatients who initiated an antidepressant treatment between the 1st January 2005 and the 31st December 2006 were selected. The dependent variable was the duration of the first episode of antidepressant treatment, categorised a priori in short duration [1-6 months] versus long duration [6 months and more] according to guidelines. Characteristics independently associated with the treatment duration were investigated using logistic regressions.

Results: Nearly two thirds of the individuals were females. Most patients were not on welfare. Three quarters of them did not present with chronic conditions. The duration of the antidepressant treatment complied with the international recommendations for only one patient of six. Adequate treatment duration was associated with being a female, being older, not being on welfare, presenting with a chronic condition and a treatment introduction by a psychiatrist or a hospital practitioner.

Conclusion: The recommendations concerning the duration of an antidepressant treatment are rarely respected in a real-life setting in France. Further analyses should be conducted to characterise the patterns of prescription according to antidepressant classes and associated treatments.