

Long-term antidepressant use linked to higher risk of heart attack, stroke and death

More Americans are taking antidepressant medications like Prozac and Zoloft for extended periods of time: One-quarter of people on the drugs have used them for a decade or more, according to [data from the National Center for Health Statistics](#). But even the longest rigorous studies of antidepressants' safety and efficacy have followed patients for only a couple of years.

Now, there's a growing concern among health professionals that some people who are taking the drugs long-term shouldn't be—needlessly subjecting themselves to side effects and potential health risks.

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People who used antidepressants had a 14% higher risk of heart attacks and strokes and a 33% [greater risk of death](#), according to findings in a meta-analysis of 17 studies that was published in 2017 in the journal *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*.

The most popular antidepressants, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, or SSRIs, affect the action of the neurotransmitter serotonin not only in the brain but throughout the body. And because serotonin is involved in critical processes like growth, digestion and immune function, disrupting serotonin levels could have widespread negative health effects, says [researcher] Marta Maslej.

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"For the sake of treating depression, you might be disrupting things," she says.

Read full, original post: [New Concerns Emerge About Long-Term Antidepressant Use](#)