

8. Quality indicators

- What are the indicators that allow monitoring quality in the management of depression?

It is important to know if the expected objectives are reached by complying with the recommendations considered to be the most important. Therefore, it is hereby proposed to assess some of the process variables that take part and the most relevant clinical outcomes. When assessing the clinical management of depression, it is advisable to measure the three key areas related to quality, for which some indicators are initially proposed, due to their apparent validity, reliability and feasibility of use in primary care consultations and in the scope of the various healthcare areas.

Five of the proposed indicators are listed and described below, which are quantitative measures that can be used as a guideline and which, if they are obtained with certain frequency, allow analysing the evolution over time, meaning that they allowing the indicators to be monitored.

Proposed indicators:

Area	Focus of the assessment	Indicator name
Diagnosis	Process	Underdiagnosis of major depression.
Treatment	Process	Follow-up of treatment with antidepressants
Treatment	Outcome	Maintenance of treatment with antidepressants
Treatment	Process	Efficient use of antidepressant drugs
Treatment	Process	Psychotherapeutic treatment in severe major depression
Treatment	Process	Psychotherapeutic treatment in mild major depression

Dimensions of the considered quality:

Quality dimension	Indicator name
Diagnostic effectiveness	Underdiagnosis of major depression
Therapeutic effectiveness	Follow-up of treatment with antidepressants
Therapeutic effectiveness	Maintenance of treatment with antidepressants
Therapeutic effectiveness	Efficient use of antidepressant drugs
Therapeutic effectiveness	Psychotherapeutic treatment in severe major depression
Therapeutic effectiveness	Psychotherapeutic treatment in mild major depression

Indicator name	UNDERDIAGNOSIS OF MAJOR DEPRESSION
Justification	It is estimated that 28% of the patients who suffer from major depression are not diagnosed. Even though this percentage is lower in the most severe forms of depression, it is important to increase the number of patients who are diagnosed. This indicator allows alerting about a possible situation of underdiagnosis of new episodes of major depression.
Formula	$\frac{\text{Recorded number of adult patients diagnosed with major depression}}{\text{Number of adult patients who, according to estimates of epidemiological studies, are expected to suffer from major depression}} \times 100$
Description of terms	<p>Adult patients: patients over 18 years of age.</p> <p>Recorded diagnosis of depression: written record of the diagnosis in the patient's medical history that he suffered from an episode of a major depressive disorder in the reference time period (prevalent cases).</p> <p>Patient's medical history: it will be considered to be the information coming from the medical history of Primary Care and/or hospital care and on paper support and/or electronic format.</p> <p>Epidemiological studies: to make estimates of expected cases, the epidemiological study that has the best available quality and that has been performed on populations with the greatest sociodemographic similarity will be selected. The number of expected patients will be obtained based on standardised estimates by age and sex.</p>
Geographic area of reference	The geographic area of reference will be indicated in order to define the resident population in this geographic area during the study period and that, if diagnosed with major depression, would be considered a case.
Time period of reference	The adult patients from the geographic area who are diagnosed in the reference period, generally the last 12 months, will be included.
Exclusion criteria	Patients under 18 years of age, patients who do not reside in the geographic area of study and patients who, despite having a recorded diagnostic history of major depression, have not had an active episode in the period of study will be excluded.
Type of indicator	Process.
Data sources	Patient's medical history, epidemiological studies.

Indicator name	FOLLOW-UP OF TREATMENT WITH ANTIDEPRESSANTS
Justification	The continuous treatment of major depression with antidepressants during 6 months or more helps to consolidate the response to treatment and reduces the risk of relapse. To decrease the number of patients who do not suitably complete the treatment period, it is recommended that follow-up contact be made with them. This indicator allows monitoring follow-up on the treatment with antidepressants.
Formula	$\frac{\text{Recorded number of adult patients diagnosed with major depression for which there is follow-up contact within the maximum period of 1 month after indication of treatment with antidepressant drugs}}{\text{Recorded number of adult patients diagnosed with major depression for which treatment with antidepressant drugs was indicated}} \times 100$
Description of terms	<p>Adult patients: patients over 18 years of age.</p> <p>Indication of treatment with antidepressant drugs: written record in the patient's medical history that, after diagnosis of a major depressive disorder, starting treatment with antidepressant drugs has been indicated. New indications of treatment after new episodes in patients with a prior history of a major depressive disorder will also be counted.</p> <p>Patient's medical history: it will be considered to be the information coming from the medical history of Primary Care and/or hospital care and on paper support and/or electronic format.</p> <p>Follow-up contact: in addition to personally attended, follow-up medical consultations, it could be considered that a patient has made follow-up contact by another system, as long as it has thus been recommended and previously agreed upon by the attending physician.</p>
Geographic area of reference	The geographic area of reference will be indicated in order to define the resident population in this geographic area during the study period and that, if diagnosed with major depression, would be considered a case.
Time period of reference	All diagnosed adult patients from the geographic area for whom treatment with antidepressant drugs has been indicated in the period of reference, generally the last 12 months, will be included.
Exclusion criteria	Patients under 18 years of age and patients not residing in the geographic area of the study are excluded. Other exclusions: patients confined to bed, transfers to other areas, death and diagnosis date within a period of less than one month.
Type of indicator	Process.
Data sources	Patient's medical history.

Indicator name	MAINTENANCE OF PHARMACOLOGICAL TREATMENT WITH ANTIDEPRESSANTS
Justification	The maintenance of treatment of major depression with antidepressants during 6 months or more helps to consolidate the response to treatment and to reduce the risk of early relapse. This indicator allows knowing the maintenance of treatment with antidepressants.
Formula	$\frac{\text{Recorded number of adult patients diagnosed with major depression who maintain treatment with antidepressant drugs for 6 months}}{\text{Recorded number of adult patients diagnosed with major depression for which treatment with antidepressant drugs was indicated}} \times 100$
Description of terms	<p>Adult patients: patients over 18 years of age.</p> <p>Indication of treatment: recorded indication of pharmacological treatment with antidepressants after diagnosis of an episode of a major depressive disorder. The new episodes of patients with a prior history of a major depressive order will also be counted. The indication must be made during the time period of reference.</p> <p>Recorded in the patient's medical history: the information coming from the medical history of Primary Care and/or hospital care and on paper support and/or in electronic format will be considered.</p> <p>Time period of reference: all adult patients from the geographic area who are diagnosed in the reference period, generally the last 12 months, will be included.</p> <p>Geographic area: the geographic area of reference will be indicated in order to define the resident population in this geographic area and that, if diagnosed with major depression, would be considered a case.</p> <p>Indication of treatment: all new indications of pharmacological treatment with antidepressants made during the time period of reference will be included.</p> <p>Maintenance of treatment: it will be considered that a patient has maintained treatment for 6 months and that the treatment has been adequate if it is thus recorded in the medical history.</p>
Geographic area of reference	The geographic area of reference will be indicated in order to define the population that resides in this geographic area during the study period and that, if diagnosed with major depression, would be considered a case.
Time period of reference	All adult patients from the geographic area who are diagnosed in the reference period, generally the last 12 months, will be included.
Exclusion criteria	Patients under 18 years of age and patients not residing in the geographic area of the study are excluded. Other exclusions: transfers to other areas, deaths, withdrawal of medication by medical prescription and diagnosis date within a period of less than 6 months.
Type of indicator	Outcome.
Data sources	Patient's medical history.

Indicator name	EFFICIENT USE OF ANTIDEPRESSANT DRUGS
Justification	SSRI antidepressants are better tolerated and safer than TCAs. New dual drugs or serotonin reuptake inhibitors and noradrenaline are not more effective, although they are more expensive and potentially more dangerous. This indicator allows monitoring efficient use of treatments with antidepressants.
Formula	$\frac{\text{Recorded number of adult patients diagnosed with major depression that are treated with SSRI drugs in the first attempt.}}{\text{Recorded number of adult patients diagnosed with major depression for which treatment with antidepressant drugs was indicated}} \times 100$
Description of terms	<p>Adult patients: all adult patients over 18 years of age, with a recorded diagnosis of major depression and the start of the indication of pharmacological treatment with antidepressants during the time period of reference will be counted.</p> <p>Recorded diagnosis of depression: written record of the diagnosis in the patient's medical history that a new episode of a major depressive disorder was diagnosed in the reference time period. The new episodes of patients with a prior history of a major depressive order will also be counted.</p> <p>Patient's medical history: it will be considered to be the information coming from the medical history of Primary Care and/or hospital care and on paper support and/or electronic format.</p> <p>Indication of treatment: all new indications of pharmacological treatment with antidepressants made during the time period of reference will be included.</p> <p>Indication of treatment with SSRI drugs in the first attempt: it will be considered that treatment with SSRI drugs in the first attempt has been indicated for a patient if it thus recorded in the medical history.</p>
Geographic area of reference	The geographic area of reference will be indicated in order to define the resident population in this geographic area and that, if diagnosed with a major depressive disorder, would be considered a case.
Time period of reference	All adult patients from the geographic area who are diagnosed in the reference period, generally the last 12 months, will be included.
Exclusion criteria	Patients under 18 years of age and patients not residing in the geographic area of the study are excluded.
Type of indicator	Process.
Data sources	Patient's medical history.

Indicator name	PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC TREATMENT IN SEVERE MAJOR DEPRESSION
Justification	Some psychotherapeutic treatments have been demonstrated to play a relevant role in the treatment of major depression. In the severe form, the combination of antidepressants and psychotherapy is considered to be the most effective option. This indicator allows monitoring the degree of coverage of psychotherapeutic treatment in combination with pharmacological treatment.
Formula	$\frac{\text{Recorded number of adult patients diagnosed with severe major depression and treated with psychotherapy in combination with antidepressants.}}{\text{Recorded number of adult patients diagnosed with severe major depression.}} \times 100$
Description of terms	<p>Patients with combined antidepressant and psychotherapy treatment: the patient receives both simultaneously and in coordination between the professionals who dispense the treatments.</p> <p>Patients treated with psychotherapy: those who receive any of the duly validated treatments.</p> <p>Adult patients: adult patients over 18 years of age, with a recorded diagnosis of major depression and the start of the indication of psychotherapeutic treatment during the time period of reference will be counted.</p> <p>Recorded diagnosis of depression: written record in the patient's medical history that a new episode of a severe major depressive disorder was diagnosed in the time period of reference. New episodes in patients with a prior history of major depression will also be counted.</p> <p>Patient's medical history: it will be considered to be the information coming from the medical history of Primary Care and/or hospital care and on paper support and/or electronic format.</p> <p>Indication of treatment: all new indications of psychotherapeutic treatment with antidepressants made during the time period of reference will be included.</p>
Geographic area of reference	The geographic area of reference will be indicated in order to define the resident population in this geographic area and that, if diagnosed with a major depressive disorder, would be considered a case.
Time period of reference	All patients who are diagnosed in the reference period, generally the last 12 months, will be included.
Exclusion criteria	Patients under 18 years of age and patients not residing in the geographic area of the study are excluded.
Type of indicator	Process.
Data sources	Patient's medical history.

Indicator name	PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC TREATMENT IN MILD MAJOR DEPRESSION
Justification	Some psychotherapeutic treatments have been demonstrated to play a relevant role in the treatment of major depression. This indicator allows monitoring the degree of coverage of psychotherapeutic treatment in mild major depression.
Formula	$\frac{\text{Recorded number of adult patients diagnosed with mild major depression that are treated with brief psychotherapy.}}{\text{Recorded number of adult patients diagnosed with mild major depression.}} \times 100$
Description of terms	<p>Patients treated with psychotherapy: those who receive any of the duly validated treatments.</p> <p>Brief Psychotherapy: psychotherapeutic treatment that does not exceed 6-8 sessions, for 10 to 12 weeks.</p> <p>Adult patients: patients over 18 years of age, with a recorded diagnosis of major depression and the start of the indication of psychotherapeutic treatment during the time period of reference will be counted.</p> <p>Recorded diagnosis of depression: written record in the patient's medical history that a new episode of a mild major depressive disorder was diagnosed in the time period of reference. New episodes in patients with a prior history of major depression will also be counted.</p> <p>Patient's medical history: it will be considered to be the information coming from the medical history of Primary Care and/or hospital care and on paper support and/or electronic format.</p> <p>Indication of treatment: all new indications of psychotherapeutic treatment made during the time period of reference will be included.</p>
Geographic area of reference	The geographic area of reference will be indicated in order to define the resident population in this geographic area and that, if diagnosed with a major depressive disorder, would be considered a case.
Time period of reference	All patients who are diagnosed in the reference period, generally the last 12 months, will be included.
Exclusion criteria	Patients under 18 years of age and patients not residing in the geographic area of the study are excluded.
Type of indicator	Process.
Data sources	Patient's medical history.