
SSRI/SNRI WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

The following criteria define the SSRI (or SNRI) withdrawal syndrome:

Criterion A

A course of treatment in which an SSRI (or SNRI) is stopped or interrupted or the dose is reduced after a period treatment of 2 weeks or more.

Criterion B

Two or more of the following symptoms develop within 1 to 10 days of criterion A (except for fluoxetine in which case the symptoms must develop within 28 days):

- (a) dizziness or lightheadedness
- (b) nausea and/or vomiting
- (c) headaches
- (d) lethargy
- (e) anxiety and/or agitation
- (f) tingling (parasthesias), numbness or "electric" shock-like sensations
- (g) tremors
- (h) sweating
- (i) insomnia
- (j) irritability
- (k) vertigo (dizziness)
- (l) diarrhea

Criterion C

The symptoms of criterion B cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

Criterion D

The symptoms are not due to a general medical condition or the direct physiological effects of another substance (e.g., a medication or a drug of misuse) that has been recently commenced, stopped, or altered in dosage.

Criterion E

The disorder is not better accounted for by an exacerbation/relapse/recurrence of the psychiatric disorder for which the SSRI was prescribed.

Adapted from:

Haddad PM The SSRI discontinuation syndrome: literature review and provisional diagnostic criteria. Presented at: XXIst Collegium Internationale Neuro-Psychopharmacologicum Congress. July 12-16, 1998; Glasgow, Scotland. Reprinted in International Drug Therapy Newsletter. 1998, 33, 46.