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Enhanced selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors as antidepressants: 2004 - 2006.

Huang Y, Williams WA.

Yale University School of Medicine, PO Box 208048, 801 Howard Avenue, New Haven, CT 06520-8048, USA. henry.huang@yale.edu

Abstract

Depression is a major psychiatric disorder. It affects millions of people worldwide and inflicts tremendous economic burden on societies. The advent of **selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors** as **antidepressants** has been a revolutionary advance in the treatment of depression and related disorders. However, **selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors** are also associated with several undesirable properties, such as delayed onset of action, low response rate and side effects. The present search for a newer generation of **antidepressants** is focused on overcoming these issues. The patent literature covered in this review, during **2004** - **2006**, illustrates several strategies employed by the pharmaceutical industry in the development of **enhanced serotonin re-uptake inhibitors**. Encouraged by the success of venlafaxine and duloxetine, several companies have pursued dual-acting **serotonin** and noradrenaline **re-uptake inhibitors** as drug candidates for depression treatment. Molecules with combined **serotonin re-uptake** inhibitor and 5-HT autoreceptor (5-HT(1A) and/or 5-HT(1B)) antagonist properties are being developed. In particular, recent research suggests that **serotonin** 5-HT(1B) **antagonists** alone or combined with **selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors** might hold unique promise as efficacious **antidepressants**. Finally, efforts are underway to formulate new drug candidates with both **serotonin re-uptake** inhibitor and neurokinin 1 (NK(1)) antagonist activities. Despite mixed results from clinical trials with several NK(1) **antagonists**, effective therapeutic **agents** for depression may still emerge from compounds with combined **serotonin** reuptake inhibitor/NK(1) antagonist properties.

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