

# Abstract

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## **Prediction of treatment response in geriatric depression from baseline folate level: interaction with an SSRI or a tricyclic antidepressant.**

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**BACKGROUND:** Depressed geriatric patients have lower levels of folate (FOL) than controls. Also, FOL supplement can reduce depressive morbidity. One hypothesis consistent with this is that FOL deficiency causes a lowering of CNS serotonin that contributes to depression.

**OBJECTIVE AND METHODS:** The present report is from one site of a multicenter study that compared an SSRI (sertraline) with a nonspecific tricyclic antidepressant (nortriptyline) in geriatric depressed patients. We added measures of FOL at baseline and outcome for 22 depressed patients older than 60 years.

**RESULTS:** Both treatments were effective. At baseline, FOL levels were within the normal range. Higher FOL levels at baseline predicted greater improvement.

**CONCLUSION:** Further study of FOL interaction with SSRI is warranted. For the group treated with the SSRI, baseline FOL level was a more efficient predictor of improvement, especially for results on a self-rating depression scale (POMS).

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