

# Antidepressants for non-specific low back pain (2008)

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**COCHRANE BACK REVIEW GROUP**  
The best evidence in back and neck pain care

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## Overview of the study

### Objectives

- To determine whether antidepressants are more effective than placebo for the treatment of non-specific low-back pain.

### Methods

- Evidence current up to 11 November 2008
- Participants: Adult subjects with non-specific low-back pain
- Intervention: Any type of antidepressant \*
- Outcomes measured
  - Primary outcomes: pain intensity, overall improvement, functional status, return-to-work
  - Secondary outcomes: physiological outcomes generic functional status

\* i.e. tricyclic and heterocyclic antidepressants, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, mono-amine oxidase inhibitors and 'atypical' antidepressant

## Results & Conclusion

- 10 trials included

Treatment	Evidence/ Quality of evidence*
Antidepressants	No clear evidence in reducing depression in chronic low back pain patients compared to placebo
	Conflicting evidence in reducing pain intensity compared to placebo

⇒ There is no clear evidence that antidepressants are more effective than placebo in the management of patients with chronic low-back pain

\* The GRADE approach was not used to assess quality of evidence.