

## ***Hypericum perforatum* L. – overview of clinical effectiveness and safety in the treatment of depression**

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*Herba Hyperici* (HH) consists of dried flowering tops or aerial parts of *Hypericum perforatum* L. (*Hypericaceae*). Standardized HH medicinal products are available as the well-established use of medicinal products for symptomatic treatment of mild and moderate depressive episodes. The constituents that contribute to the activity are hypericin, pseudohypericin, flavonoids and oligomeric procyanidins. The mechanisms of action, as well as the responsible compounds of *Hypericum* extracts, are still subject of investigation since a precise pathway is yet to be determined. Several actions contributing to clinical efficacy are reported such as blockade of the reuptake of serotonin (5-HT), noradrenalin and dopamine; regulation of postsynaptic 5-HT1 and 5-HT2 receptors and of dopaminergic receptors as well as increased affinity for GABA receptors.

*Hypericum* monotherapy for mild and moderate depression has been proven to be superior to placebo in improving the symptoms and not significantly different from antidepressant medication. In the studies comparing HH with placebo, there was moderate evidence that HH was not more likely to cause adverse events than placebo, overall. However, specific adverse events, such as neurologic/nervous system and organ system events were more likely in those taking HH. Analyses did not suggest that the effectiveness or safety of HH varies by depression severity, but the available research is primarily based on mild and moderate depression patient samples and there is a lack of research studies in severe depression. Data from clinical studies showed the efficacy of HH as comparable to other antidepressant medication for the treatment of mild or moderate depression.

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