

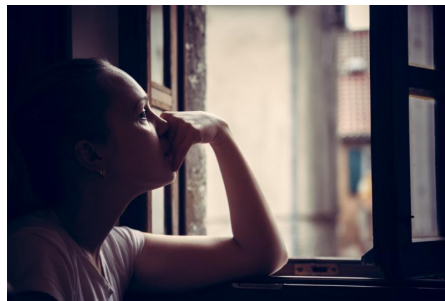


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Intranasal Ketamine for Treatment-Resistant Depression

There is an urgent need for better medications that work quickly to treat major depression and bipolar disorder. The treatment should also be tolerable and work for depressed patients who have not responded to conventional treatments.



Ketamine is a medication that is used intravenously for anesthesia, but multiple studies have shown that a single intravenous infusion of ketamine produces a rapid antidepressant response. Research indicates that regular infusions may be promising, but regular IV infusions are not appealing to most patients and therefore compliance is an issue. And, oral ketamine is extensively broken down by the liver before it can be absorbed by the body, so oral therapy is not a good option. Therefore, the intranasal route has been investigated.

Intranasal drug delivery offers a route to the brain that bypasses problems related to gastrointestinal absorption, first-pass metabolism by the liver, and the blood-brain barrier; and the onset of therapeutic action is rapid. Intranasal medications avoid the inconvenience and discomfort of IV therapy. Intranasal medications have been used to treat migraine, acute and chronic pain, Parkinson's disease, cognitive disorders, autism, schizophrenia, social phobia, and depression.

In a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, crossover trial conducted in 20 patients with major depression, physicians and researchers at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, tested the safety, tolerability, and efficacy of intranasal ketamine in patients

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with depression who had failed at least one prior antidepressant trial. The researchers found that a single intranasal dose of ketamine (50 mg) outperformed placebo; the response rate was 44% versus 6%, respectively. Anxiety ratings also decreased significantly more with ketamine. Patients showed significant improvement in depressive symptoms at 24 hours after ketamine compared to placebo. Intranasal ketamine was well tolerated with minimal psychotomimetic or dissociative effects and was not associated with clinically significant changes in hemodynamic parameters like blood pressure.

Intranasal ketamine represents a promising advance in treatment-resistant depression (TRD) therapeutics. Most studies report a duration of response up to 7 days and remission up to 3-5 days after a single dose. "Most adverse events ... subsided spontaneously by 60 to 90 minutes post dose," said Vanina Popova, MD. In addition, "there was no pushback" to the nasal delivery system. "The route of administration was well received, and it was certainly more convenient than intravenous administration," she said.

Intranasal ketamine is not commercially available, but the clinical use of intranasal ketamine is increasing internationally. Research has concluded that the drug formulation, the delivery device, the technique and individual patient factors play an important role in tolerability and efficacy when using intranasal ketamine for Treatment Resistant Depression.

Intranasal ketamine has been reported in studies to help depressed patients who have not responded to conventional therapy with minimal side effects. Ask our pharmacist for more information about compounded intranasal ketamine. We customize medications to meet each patient's specific needs.

References available upon request.

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