

# Switching antipsychotic medication to reduce sexual dysfunction in people with psychosis: the REMEDY RCT

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## Plain English summary

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## Plain English summary

Antipsychotic medications can improve the mental health of people with psychosis but may also cause side effects. These include sexual side effects, such as reduced desire for sex or less pleasure from having sex. One way to try to tackle this problem is to switch the medicine people take to one that is thought less likely to cause these problems. However, it is unclear if this helps, and switching medication could potentially harm mental health or cause new side effects.

We conducted a study to compare the effect of switching with not switching the medication of people with psychosis experiencing sexual side effects. We collected information about sexual functioning, mental health, quality of life and use of services at the start of the study and 6 months later. We also interviewed nurses, doctors and patients to get their views about the study.

We recruited 10 patients over a 12-month period and conducted interviews with 51 clinicians and four patients.

Many clinicians said that they found it difficult to talk to their patients about sex. Some thought that these problems occurred rarely and that other side effects mattered more to patients. Many patients were concerned about switching their medication, especially when it had improved their mental health. Others felt that these side effects were not very important, and some were not prepared to take part in a trial that could delay a change being made to their medication.

We did not collect enough information to be able to find out if switching medication helps people who experience sexual side effects of antipsychotic drugs.

It is important that clinicians ask about sexual side effects of antipsychotic medication and that further efforts are made to find ways to help patients who experience them.



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