ABSTRACT

Background: Depression and antidepressant therapy have been associated with sexual dysfunction in short term and long-term treatment. This report describes effects on sexual functioning during long-term treatment for Major Depressive Disorder (MDD).

Methods: This 8-month, double-blind, placebo-controlled study of duloxetine and escitalopram had 3 phases: an 8-week acute phase, a 6-month flexible-dose extension phase, and a 6-month fixed-dose extension phase. The Quality of Life Enjoyment and Satisfaction Questionnaire (Q-LES-Q-SF) was used to assess sexual function.

Results: Statistically significant worsening of sexual functioning as measured by the Q-LES-Q was observed for escitalopram versus placebo at 4 and 8 weeks (p<.05). Duloxetine was not statistically different from placebo at any time during the 8-month study. Baseline demographic comparisons were made using chi-square test for categorical variables and t-test for continuous variables.

Conclusions: Short-term treatment demonstrated worsening of sexual functioning with escitalopram compared to placebo, while duloxetine was not significantly different from placebo.