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**A COST-UTILITY ANALYSIS OF VENLAFAXINE XR COMPARED WITH DULOXETINE AND SSRIS FOR THE TREATMENT OF MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER IN ITALY**

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**INTRODUCTION:** Depression is a highly prevalent disease and its costs can be burdensome to both patients and payers.

**OBJECTIVES:** To compare the short-term costs, outcomes, and cost-effectiveness associated with major depressive disorder (MDD) treatment with venlafaxine XR and major market comparators (duloxetine and two selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors [SSRIs], namely escitalopram and sertraline HCL) in Italy from the Italian National Health Service perspective.

**AIMS:** To inform treatment decisions based on cost effectiveness of MDD treatments.

**METHODS:** A decision tree structure was used to model MDD treatment over 1 year. Patients were treated with one of the model comparators and based on published clinical literature; either remained depressed, achieved response but no remission, or achieved remission. Drug costs were set to the reimbursed price for the recommended dose of each treatment. Costs of hospitalization and utility weights were based on depression status.

**RESULTS:** Venlafaxine XR was estimated to be the most effective treatment (0.736 quality-adjusted life years [QALYs]) followed by the SSRIs (0.731) and duloxetine (0.714). Total annual MDD-related costs for venlafaxine (€691) were estimated to be lower than all comparators (duloxetine=€1,308, escitalopram=€874) except sertraline HCL (€638), owing largely to drug cost differences and hospitalization savings associated with better projected depression status. Venlafaxine was cost-saving (more effective, less costly) compared with duloxetine and escitalopram. The incremental cost per QALY gained vs. sertraline HCL was €9,844.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Based on the model, venlafaxine XR represents a cost-effective treatment option for MDD in Italy and may result in cost-savings depending on the comparison.