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BRIGHT LIGHT TREATMENT OF DEPRESSION FOR ADOLESCENTS

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Background: There is a significant incidence of depression, also in adolescents. Bright light therapy, which is reported to be effective treating depressive adults, could provide safe, economic, and effective rapid recovery also in adolescents.

Methods: We treated depressed adolescents with bright white (2,500 Lux) light for one hour a day (morning) and for another week with placebo. Saliva samples were collected 1 week and just before and immediately after treatment and placebo and 1 week later and assayed for Cortisol and melatonin respectively to observe any change in circadian timing. Beck's depression inventory scales were administered.

Results: Two volunteers, between 14 and 17 years old, completed the study. Both patients experienced mood improvement. Average BDI scores improved 5 points. There were no significant treatment effects or time-by-treatment interactions. No significant adverse reactions were observed. The assays of saliva showed significant differences between treatment and placebo.

Conclusion: Antidepressant response to bright light treatment in this age group was statistically superior to placebo (Clinically significant overall improvement of 16%).