

From Evidence to Practice: Treating Depression with Ketamine & Esketamine

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Disclosures

- Michael P. Twist, DO, MFA
 - No commercial conflicts of interest
- Medication may be referred to by “Brand Name” (Spravato®), for clarity.
- Off-label use of medication will be identified and discussed.
- Resources for treatment will be identified with details referenced including protocols for treatment and contact information as found per their websites.



Learning Objectives

After attending this session, participants will be able to:

- Be familiar with the research supporting treatment of depression with ketamine and esketamine.
- Understand the (proposed) mechanism(s) of action by which these medications produce antidepressant effect.
- Talk to patients about these agents, including treatment protocols and potential risks, benefits, side effects, and acute drug reactions.
- Identify and refer appropriate patients for treatment.



APA

Council of Research Task
Force on Novel
Biomarkers and
Treatments

March 1, 2017

“We suggest that clinicians prescribe ketamine or esketamine cautiously, only after exhausting other recommended non-electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) treatments for resistant depression.”

-“A Consensus Statement on the Use of Ketamine in the Treatment of Mood Disorders”



“Interventional Psychiatry”

Neurostimulation / Neuromodulation

ECT, TMS, theta-burst stimulation

Rapid-acting / procedural pharmacologic treatments

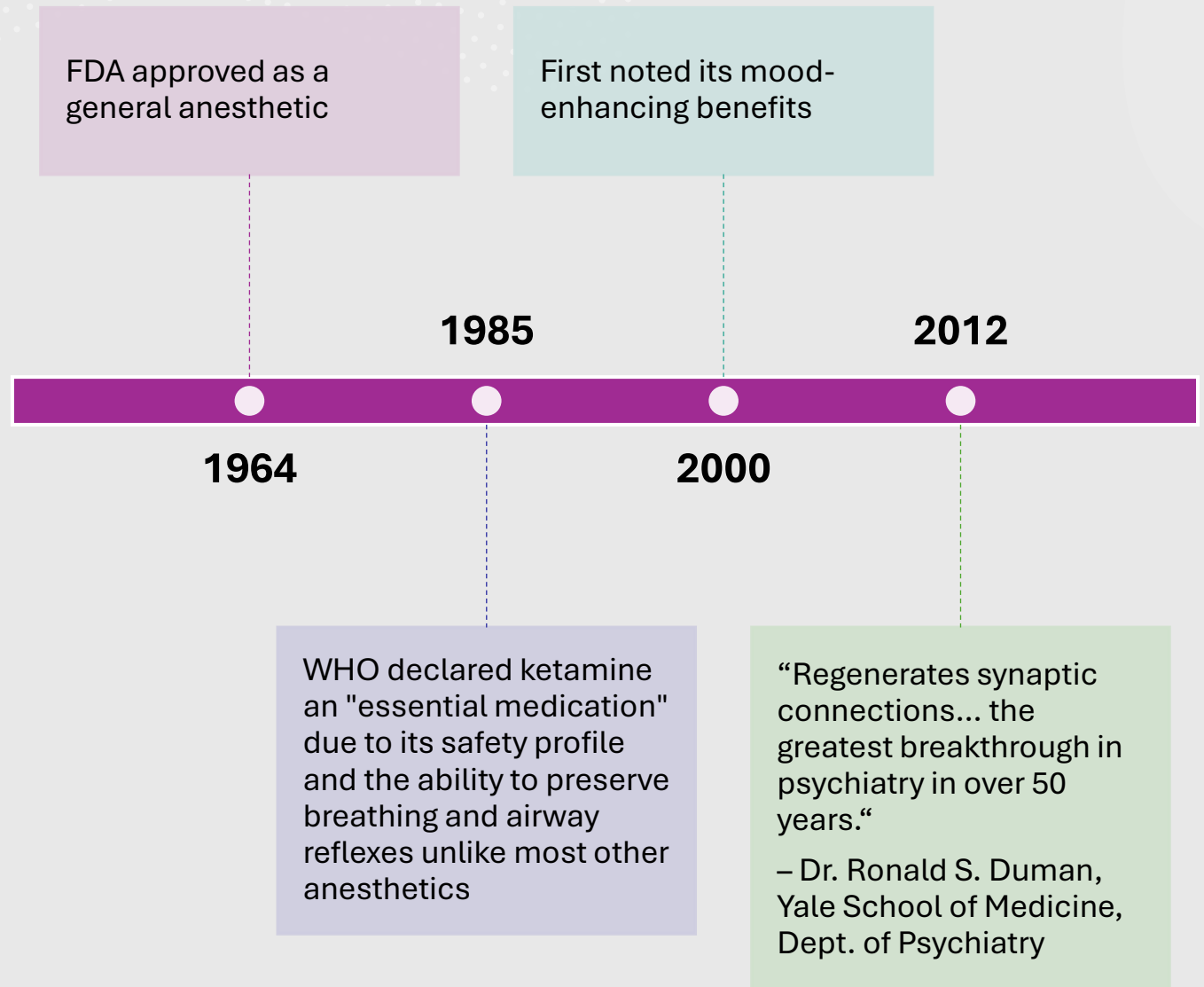
Esketamine (Spravato), IV ketamine

Invasive neuromodulation

Vagus nerve stimulation (VNS), deep
brain stimulation (DBS)

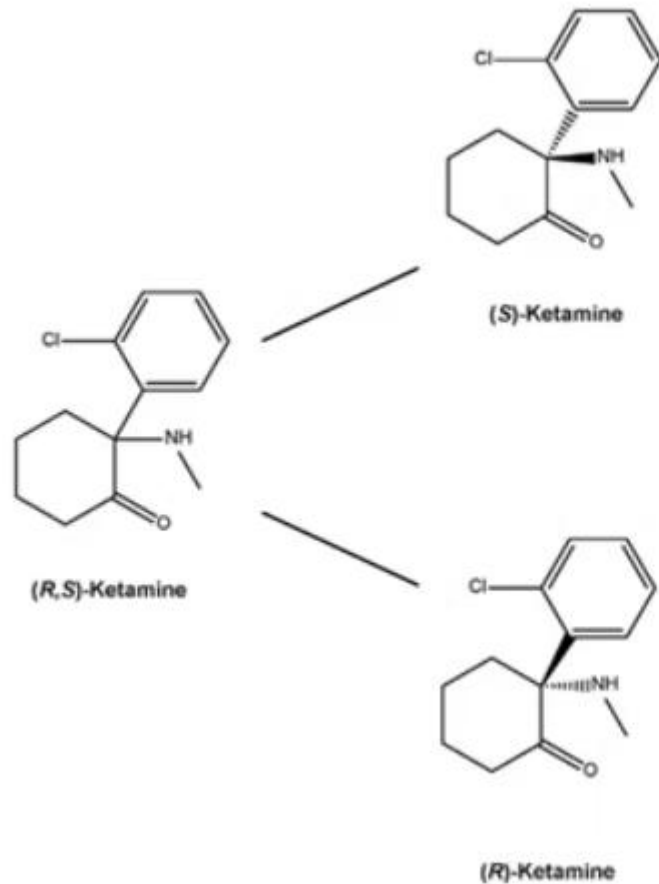
KETAMINE

*Dissociative anesthetic,
not a hallucinogenic*



Chemical Structure

Ketamine is a racemic mixture of two enantiomers:




R-ketamine

+

S-ketamine (Esketamine)



Ketamine Formulations

- **IV**
 - **Oral (no established preferred dose)**
 - **Intranasal (no established preferred dose)**
- 

The Research

“Antidepressant effects of IV ketamine in depressed patients.”
Biological Psychiatry, 47(4), 351–354. **Berman RM**, Cappiello A, Anand A, et al. (2000)

- A double-blind, placebo-controlled, crossover study including 7 patients with Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) who had not responded adequately to standard antidepressants. Each participant received a single intravenous infusion of racemic ketamine (**0.5 mg/kg over 40 minutes**) and, on a separate occasion, a saline placebo.
- Depressive symptoms, measured by the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HDRS), **improved significantly within 4 hours after** ketamine infusion and remained improved **for approximately 3 days** before returning toward baseline. No significant change occurred after placebo.

This small but pivotal study was the first to demonstrate that a single, low-dose IV infusion of ketamine can produce rapid (hours, not weeks) antidepressant effects, establishing the foundation for all subsequent ketamine depression research.

“A randomized trial of an N-methyl-D-aspartate antagonist in treatment-resistant major depression.”

Zarate CA Jr et al., **2006** – *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 63(8):856–864

- Randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, crossover (N = 18 TRD).
- 71 % response within 24 hours; mean MADRS reduction > 50 %.
- Effects waned by 1 week.

Confirmed rapid, robust but transient antidepressant efficacy of IV ketamine in TRD, replicating and extending prior findings.

“Single, Repeated, and Maintenance Ketamine Infusions for Treatment-Resistant Depression: A Randomized Controlled Trial.”

Jennifer L. Phillips et al., American Journal of Psychiatry 176(5):401-409, May 2019

- Forty-one patients in a randomized, double-blind crossover of a single infusion of IV ketamine (0.5 mg/kg) vs midazolam (active control), depression severity via the MADRS.
- Among those who responded, weekly maintenance infusions (once weekly) were associated with maintained reductions in depressive symptoms

Maintenance infusions can sustain antidepressant benefits, supporting the concept that treatment shouldn't stop after the initial series if relapse is to be avoided.

Ketamine versus ECT for Nonpsychotic Treatment-Resistant Major Depression

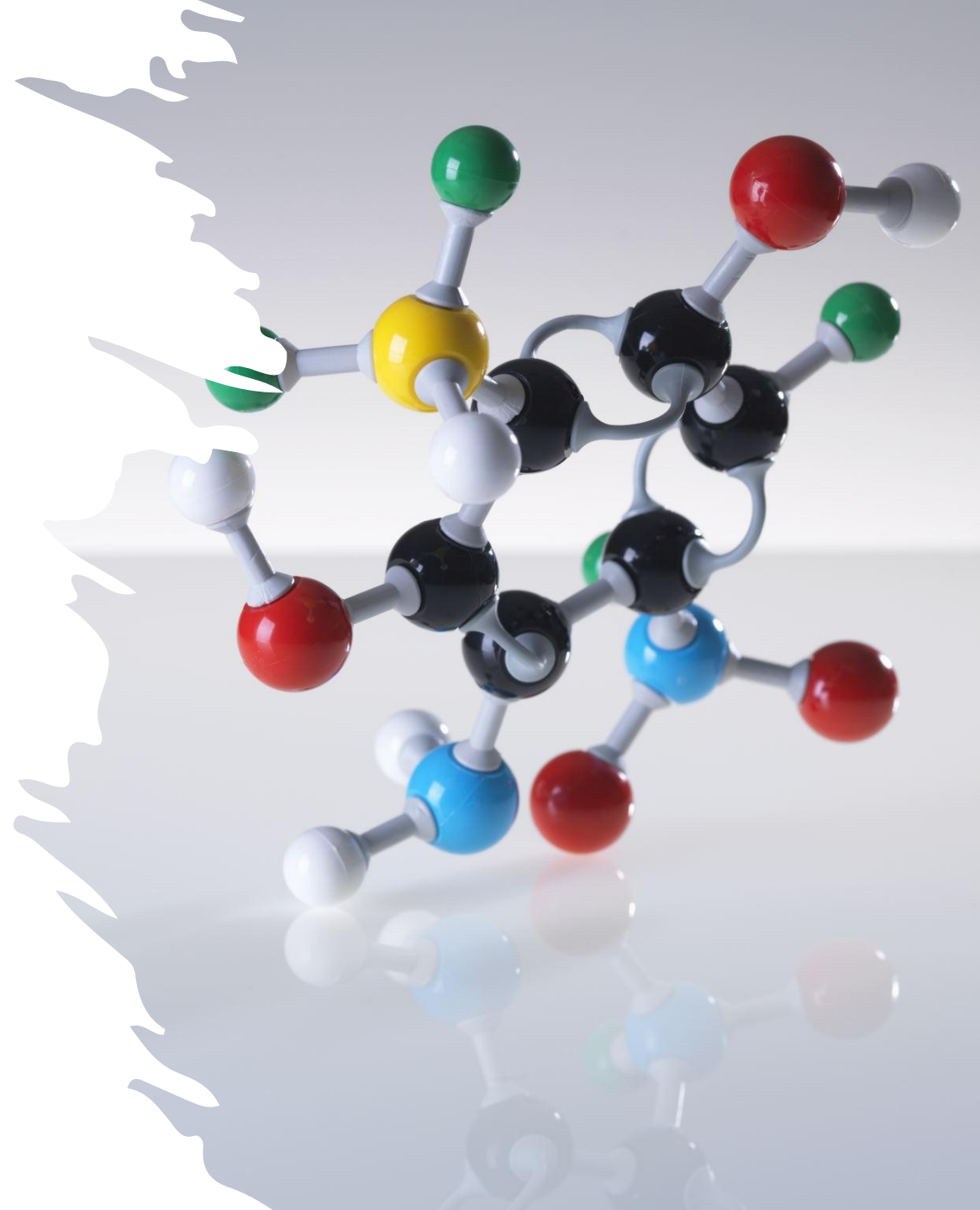
N. Anand, S.J. Mathew, G. Sanacora, et al. N Engl J Med. **2023**;388(25):2315–2325.

- Double-blind, randomized, 403 patients with TRD.
- Series of IV ketamine (0.5 mg/kg) vs ECT (electroconvulsive therapy), 3 times weekly for up to 3 weeks.
- Ketamine was *noninferior to ECT* for depression response (55.4% vs 41.2% response rate).
- Fewer cognitive side effects with ketamine vs. ECT.

Large RCT establishing ketamine as a valid alternative to ECT for TRD.

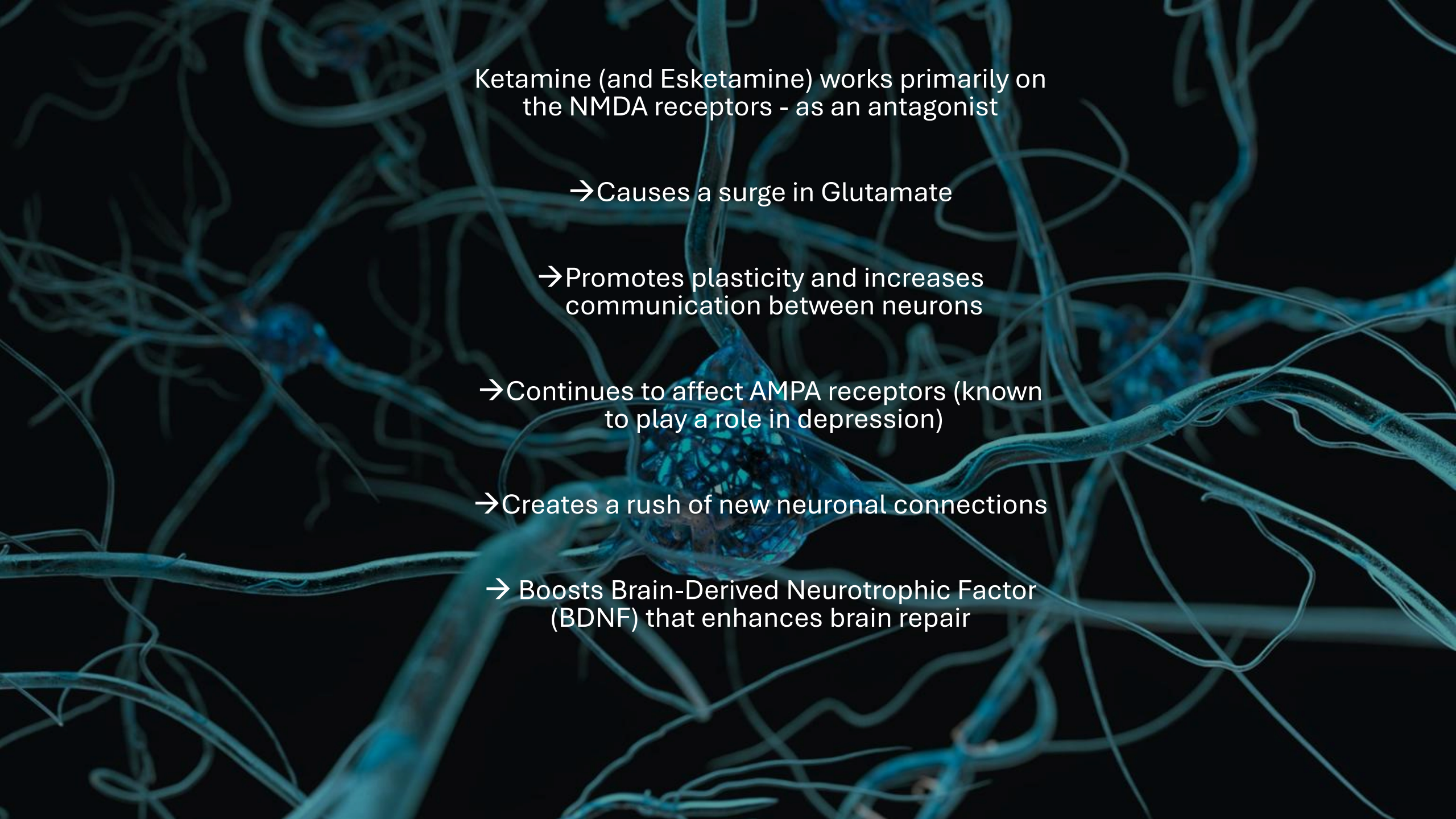
Ketamine/Esketamine: Proposed/Known Mechanism(s) of Action (?)

1. Affinity for multiple receptors:
NMDA, Opioid, AMPA
2. Structural Interconnectivity
3. Default Mode Network Deactivation



N-methyl-D-aspartate (**NMDA**) receptor

- **Glutamate** is the **primary excitatory neurotransmitter** in the brain
 - Binds to several types of receptors, including the **NMDA** receptor.
 - Ketamine & Esketamine = **NMDA receptor antagonists**
- * **Other NMDA antagonists** such as Memantine **are not effective** for treatment-resistant depression.



Ketamine (and Esketamine) works primarily on the NMDA receptors - as an antagonist

→ Causes a surge in Glutamate

→ Promotes plasticity and increases communication between neurons


→ Continues to affect AMPA receptors (known to play a role in depression)

→ Creates a rush of new neuronal connections

→ Boosts Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF) that enhances brain repair



Structural Interconnectivity

- Prefrontal cortex ↔ Hippocampus
 - Prefrontal cortex ↔ Amygdala
 - Thalamus ↔ Cortex
 - PFC ↔ Anterior Cingulate
 - Hippocampus ↔ Limbic pathways
- 

fMRI “rest scan” activity;
pattern in the absence of task

Raichle, M. E., MacLeod, A. M., Snyder, A. Z.,
Powers, W. J., Gusnard, D. A., & Shulman, G. L.
(2001).

“A Default Mode of Brain Function.”
Proceedings of the National Academy of
Sciences (PNAS), 98(2), 676–682.

Medial Prefrontal
Cortex

Posterior
Cingulate/precuneus

Angular Gyri

Default
Mode
Network

*Proven Network,
Theoretical Function*



Self-referential thought



Mind-wandering



Autobiographical memory



Social cognition



Future planning

“Default Mode Connectivity in Major Depressive Disorder Measured Up to 10 Days After a Single Ketamine Infusion.”

Evans JW et al. (2018). *Biological Psychiatry: Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuroimaging*, 3(6):485-493.

- 58 participants total: 33 with major depressive disorder and 25 healthy controls. Double-blind, placebo-controlled crossover design: each participant had one infusion of Ketamine (0.5 mg/kg IV) and one infusion of placebo, separated by ~2 weeks.
- Resting-state functional MRI scans at baseline, ~2 days post-infusion, and ~10 days post-infusion (for both ketamine and placebo conditions).
- **Two days after ketamine in the MDD group, connectivity between the insula and the DMN was “normalized”** (i.e., moved toward the levels seen in healthy controls).
- The effect seen at ~2 days appeared to **reverse by ~10 days post-ketamine** (connectivity differences were no longer present) in the MDD group. The changes were not seen with placebo.

IV Ketamine Treatment Protocols

Established via short-term randomized trials:
ketamine with placebo vs. active controls
Berman et al. (2000) and **Zarate** et al. (2006)

- **0.5 mg/kg**
 - .75 or 1 mg/kg may be suitable for patients not responsive
 - BMI ≥ 30 kg/m² : more prone to transient blood pressure >180/100 mmHg or pulse >110 bpm
 - calculate the dose according to *ideal* body weight and *not the actual* weight
- **Infused over 40 minutes** Slower rates may mitigate sedation and other adverse effects
- Expected peak serum concentration : 70-200 ng/mL
- **6-8 treatments given over 2-4 weeks**

+

○

*“Efficacy and safety of intranasal **ESKETAMINE** adjunctive to oral antidepressant therapy in treatment-resistant depression.”*

Daly EJ, Singh JB, Fedgchin M, et al. (2018). JAMA Psychiatry, 75(2), 139–148

●

- Randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled
- 67 adults with treatment-resistant major depressive disorder
- Esketamine added to a *newly initiated* oral antidepressant
 - **Rapid reduction in depressive symptoms**
 - Significant improvement within **24 hours**
 - **Dose-response** relationship

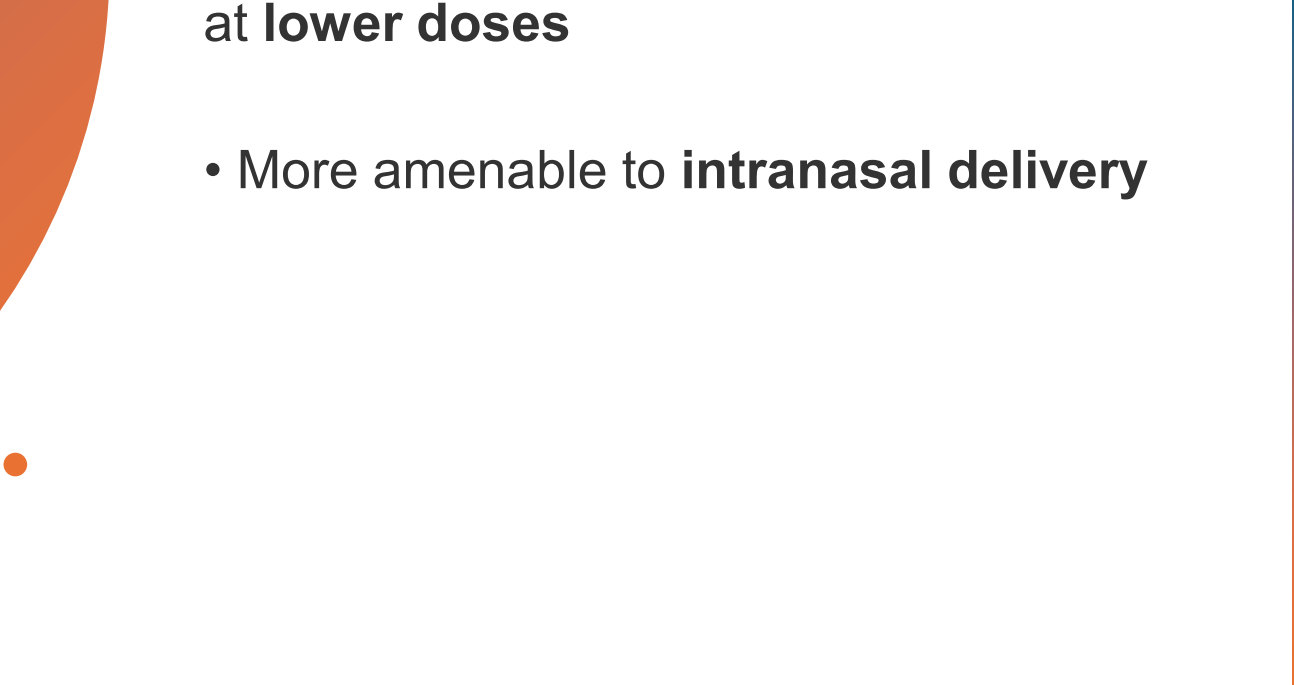
Demonstrated that esketamine itself, not just IV ketamine, had antidepressant efficacy.

●

●



Esketamine

- ~3–4× **higher NMDA receptor affinity** than R-ketamine
 - Produces similar antidepressant effects at **lower doses**
 - More amenable to **intranasal delivery**
- 

SPRAVATO® (Esketamine Nasal)

March 5, 2019

First FDA-approved nasal spray for
treatment-resistant depression.





FDA Approvals

March 5, 2019	For treatment-resistant depression (TRD) in adults (in conjunction with an oral antidepressant)	First U.S. approval of esketamine nasal spray. 56-84mg
August 3, 2020	For depressive symptoms in adults with major depressive disorder (MDD) with acute suicidal ideation or behavior , in conjunction with an oral antidepressant.	Expanded indication to patients with acute suicidal risk. 84mg
January 21, 2025	For monotherapy use in adults with TRD (i.e., without the requirement of concurrent oral antidepressant)	Supplemental indication: the first-and-only monotherapy for TRD. 56-84mg



14 WEEKS, 14 TREATMENTS:

Induction:

2 TREATMENTS PER WEEK X 4 WEEKS
– *evaluate benefit before continuing*

Maintenance:





1 TREATMENT PER WEEK X 4 WEEKS
1 Treatment QOWEEK X 4 WEEKS



“Treatment Resistant Depression (TRD)”

Major depressive disorder in adults who have not responded adequately to at least two different antidepressant treatments, given at adequate dose and duration, during the current depressive episode.

– Phase 3 Trials (**TRANSFORM & SUSTAIN**) & FDA Approval

-  **Pharmacologically appropriate**
- Any standard antidepressant class (e.g., SSRI, SNRI, bupropion, mirtazapine, TCAs, etc.)
- Augmentation strategies (e.g., antipsychotics) **do not** count as standalone failed trials
-  **Adequate dose**
- Generally \geq minimum FDA-recommended therapeutic dose
- Determined by clinician judgment or documentation standards used in the trials
-  **Adequate duration**
- **Typically \geq 6 weeks** (often 6–8 weeks in studies)
- Taken with reasonable adherence
-  **During the *current* depressive episode**
- Failures from prior episodes **do not count** - this is a *key distinction from some broader TRD definitions*



Response threshold for “failure”

In the trials, **non-response** was typically defined as:

- **<50% improvement** in depressive symptoms
 - Measured using **standardized scales** (e.g., HAM-D, MADRS, PHQ-9)
 - Full remission is **not required** for the treatment to be considered a failure.
-

SPRAVATO[®] Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS)

www.spravatorems.com

1-855-382-6022

- Because of the risks for sedation, dissociation, respiratory depression, and abuse and misuse, SPRAVATO[®] is only available through a restricted program called the SPRAVATO[®] Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) Program.
- SPRAVATO[®] can only be administered at healthcare settings certified in the SPRAVATO[®] REMS Program. Patients treated in outpatient healthcare settings must be enrolled in the program.



SPRAVATO® REMS
Patient Enrollment Form - Outpatient Use Only

Johnson & Johnson

INSTRUCTIONS:

This form is intended only for use by outpatient medical offices or clinics, excluding emergency departments

1. Complete this form online at www.SPRAVATOREMS.com.

This section is to be completed by the Prescriber

* Indicates required field

Healthcare Setting Information			
Healthcare Setting Name*			
Healthcare Setting DEA License Number* (associated with the Healthcare Setting address):			
Address 1*		Address 2*	
City*	State*	ZIP*	
Phone*	Fax*		
Prescriber Information			
First Name*		Last Name*	
Credentialed*: <input type="checkbox"/> Physician <input type="checkbox"/> Physician Assistant <input type="checkbox"/> Nurse <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacist <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		Prescriber DEA License Number*	
Specialty*: <input type="checkbox"/> Psychiatry <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Family Practice <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____			
Phone*	Fax*	Email*	
Prescriber Signature*		Date*	
Referring Healthcare Provider – if different from Prescriber			
First Name:		Last Name:	
Relevant Clinical Information			
List all pre-existing medical and psychiatric conditions*:			

List concomitant medications (e.g., CNS depressants, adjunctive depression medications, sedative hypnotics, psychostimulants, monoamine oxidase inhibitors [MAOIs]):			

Healthcare providers should report suspected adverse events or product quality complaints associated with SPRAVATO® to Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc., a Johnson & Johnson Company at 1-800-526-7736 or the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088 or online at www.fda.gov/medwatch.

SPRAVATO REMS

- Pharmacy
- Treatment Site
- Provider
- Patient

Spravato

esketamine nasal



BLACK BOX WARNINGS

Sedation, Dissociation, Respiratory Depression

risk of sedation, dissociative or perceptual changes after esketamine admin; respiratory depression observed post-marketing; monitor patients for at least 2h at each tx session, then assess when patient is clinically stable and ready to leave healthcare setting

Spravato

esketamine nasal



BLACK BOX WARNINGS

Abuse and Misuse

esketamine has potential to be abused and misused; weigh risk/benefit in patients at higher risk of abuse; monitor for signs/symptoms of abuse and misuse

Suicidality

antidepressants incr. suicidality risk in peds and young adult patients in short-term studies; monitor closely for clinical worsening and suicidality; advise families and caregivers of need for close observation and communication w/ prescriber; not approved for peds patients

Pregnancy

Clinical Summary

avoid use during pregnancy;
inadequate human data available;
possible risk of skeletal
malformations based on animal data
at >0.3x MRHD; possible dose-
dependent risk of neonatal adverse
effects based on limited human data
w/ ketamine IV

Pregnancy Registry

encourage patients to enroll in
National Pregnancy Registry for
Antidepressants at 1-844-405-6185;
additional info at

Average Frequency of Dose Dependent Side Effects
SPRAVATO® (esketamine) phase 3 clinical trials:
Esketamine + antidepressant vs. Placebo + antidepressant

Peak at 40-60 minutes and (most) resolve at 60-120 minutes (cognitive slowing at 2-4 hours)

- Anxiety – 13 vs. 6 percent of patients
- **Increased blood pressure** – 10 vs. 3 percent (SBP +20-25, DBP +10-15)
- **Dissociation** – 41 vs. 9 percent
- **Dizziness** – 29 vs. 8 percent
- Hypoesthesia – 18 vs. 2 percent
- **Nausea** – 28 vs. 9 percent (peaks at 60-90 mins)
- **Vomiting** – 9 vs. 2 percent (peaks at 60-90 mins)
- **Sedation** (somnolence) – 23 vs. 9 percent
- **Lethargy** (fatigue) – 11 vs. 5 percent
- Vertigo – 23 vs. 3 percent

AVERAGE change of parameters with Spravato



Systolic BP

↑ ~7–10 mmHg

Diastolic BP

↑ ~4–6 mmHg

Heart rate

↑ ~2–5 bpm

O₂ saturation

↓ ~0–1% (usually none)

Category	Status
Aneurysm / AVM	✗ Contraindicated
Prior intracerebral hemorrhage	✗ Contraindicated
Hypersensitivity to ketamine	✗ Contraindicated
Uncontrolled HTN / CV disease	⚠ Caution (BP>140/90)
Psychosis / bipolar mania	⚠ Avoid or extreme caution
Substance use disorder	⚠ Caution
Pregnancy / breastfeeding	⚠ Avoid
CNS depressants	⚠ Increased sedation
Hepatic impairment (severe)	⚠ Avoid

Spravato

esketamine nasal

SAFETY/MONITORING

Monitoring Parameters

BP at baseline, 40min after admin, then as clinically needed for at least 2h after admin, more frequently if hypertensive encephalopathy history; respiratory status incl. pulse oximetry, signs/symptoms of sedation and dissociation for at least 2h after admin; consider monitoring for longer if moderate hepatic impairment

Drug Interaction Properties

Properties of esketamine that may cause clinically relevant interactions with other drugs:

- CNS depression
- hypertensive effects



SPRAVATO® REMS

Patient Monitoring Form - Outpatient Use Only

For Healthcare Setting Use Place
Patient Label or Barcode Here

INSTRUCTIONS:

This form is intended only for use by outpatient medical offices or clinics, **excluding emergency departments**. You must also submit the **Patient Enrollment Form** if this is the patient's first treatment session.

1. Monitor the patient for any signs of sedation, dissociation, or respiratory depression during the 2-hour monitoring period as a requirement of the REMS.
2. Complete all required fields on this form after **every** treatment session for **all** outpatients enrolled in the SPRAVATO® REMS.
3. Submit completed patient monitoring forms within **7 days** online at www.SPRAVATOREMS.com.

*Indicates Required Field

Patient			
First Name*	MI	Last Name*	Birthdate* (MM/DD/YYYY)
		Sex*	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Is this the patient's first treatment? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
If YES, is the patient enrolled? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
If NO is selected, please submit the Patient Enrollment Form at www.SpravatoREMS.com or by fax.			
Concomitant Medication			
Is the patient currently taking any of the following medication(s) that may cause sedation, dissociation, respiratory depression, or blood pressure changes (including but not limited to benzodiazepines, sedative hypnotics, opioids, psychostimulants)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
If yes, list medications here: _____			
Monitoring Healthcare Provider			
First Name*		Last Name*	
Telephone*		Email*	
Healthcare Setting Information (PRINT)			
Healthcare Setting Name*			
Healthcare Setting Address 1*		Healthcare Setting Address 2	
City*	State*	ZIP*	Healthcare Setting DEA Number*
Patient Treatment Session Information (Administration and Monitoring)			
Treatment Date* (MM/DD/YYYY): _____			
Dose Administered*	Lot Number*		
<input type="checkbox"/> 50 mg <input type="checkbox"/> 84 mg <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____			
Treatment Duration* (Patient must be monitored for <u>at least</u> 2 hours)	Total treatment duration _____ minutes (from 1st device administration to completion of monitoring) If not monitored for at least 2 hours, provide reason why: _____		
Monitoring of Vital Signs*: Were vital signs in acceptable range prior to administration? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Treatment session completion? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Monitoring of Pulse Oximetry*: Was pulse oximetry at an acceptable level prior to administration? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No During treatment? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No At treatment session completion? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If a Serious Adverse Event (SAE) occurred during the session, describe in the following section	
Serious Adverse Events of Interest			
For this SPRAVATO® REMS, a Serious Adverse Event (SAE) of interest is defined as any event involving sedation, dissociation, respiratory depression, or hypertension that results in death, hospitalization, disability/permanent damage, an important medical event*, or is life-threatening. Did the patient experience a SAE of interest as defined above? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (describe in following section) <input type="checkbox"/> No			

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Fax: 1-877-778-0091

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SPRAVATO® REMS

Patient Monitoring Form - Outpatient Use Only

For Healthcare Setting Use Place
Patient Label or Barcode Here

*Indicates Required Field

Patient Information (PRINT)			
First Name*	MI	Last Name*	Birthdate* (MM/DD/YYYY)
		Sex*	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Monitoring Healthcare Provider			
First Name*		Last Name*	
Phone*		Email*	
Treatment Date (MM/DD/YYYY)			
Serious Adverse Events of Interest – Additional Details (PRINT)			
Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. – a Johnson & Johnson Company Safety Department will follow up to obtain more information about events reported in this table. If needed, add additional pages to document SAEs.			
Event Outcome (Check all that apply)*	Event Timing	Description of Serious Adverse Event of Interest (include relevant details such as clinical course, therapeutic interventions, comorbidities, prescription/nonprescription medications)	Event Resolution
The SAE resulted in one or more of the following outcomes: <input type="checkbox"/> Death <input type="checkbox"/> Life-threatening <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitalization <input type="checkbox"/> Disability/permanent damage <input type="checkbox"/> Important Medical Event	Date of Event (MM/DD/YYYY) During treatment session? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Sedation <input type="checkbox"/> Dissociation <input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory depression <input type="checkbox"/> Hypertension Details: _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown If yes, time to resolution (min): _____
The SAE resulted in one or more of the following outcomes: <input type="checkbox"/> Death <input type="checkbox"/> Life-threatening <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitalization <input type="checkbox"/> Disability/permanent damage <input type="checkbox"/> Important Medical Event	Date of Event (MM/DD/YYYY) During treatment session? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Sedation <input type="checkbox"/> Dissociation <input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory depression <input type="checkbox"/> Hypertension Details: _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown If yes, time to resolution (min): _____
The SAE resulted in one or more of the following outcomes: <input type="checkbox"/> Death <input type="checkbox"/> Life-threatening <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitalization <input type="checkbox"/> Disability/permanent damage <input type="checkbox"/> Important Medical Event	Date of Event (MM/DD/YYYY) During treatment session? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Sedation <input type="checkbox"/> Dissociation <input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory depression <input type="checkbox"/> Hypertension Details: _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown If yes, time to resolution (min): _____
*Defined as any event that may jeopardize the patient or may require intervention to prevent one of the above outcomes.			
Report other product quality complaints or adverse events that are not defined above to: Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. at 1-800-526-7736 or the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088 or www.fda.gov/medwatch .			

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Time to Effect?

“ASPIRE” I & II Trials 2017-2019, Janssen(J&J)

Esketamine (84mg) + standard of care
in adults with MDD and active SI/Intent

- Greater improvement in MADRS score at 24 hours compared to placebo + standard of care (95% CI; ~3.8 points)
- At day 25, the difference was still present (95% CI; ~3.4 points)
- The magnitude of between-group difference (esketamine vs. placebo) ***did not appear to substantially increase from 24 hours to 4 weeks; most gains showed up early and the further gains by 4 weeks were modest*** and the tx-placebo difference didn't broaden markedly

Maintenance?

“Patients who continued SPRAVATO® treatment were less likely to experience a return of depressive symptoms (known as relapse) compared to those who stopped therapy.”

SUSTAIN-1 Trial
Jannsen 2017/2018
Pub. *JAMA Psychiatry*, May
2019

*“Esketamine Nasal Spray for the Rapid
Reduction of Depressive Symptoms in
Patients with TRD: A Randomized
Double-Blind Withdrawal Study”*

- 705 adults with TRD, phase 3, multicenter, randomized, double-blind
- Induction + optimization with esketamine + oral antidepressant → those with stable remission (176) or stable response (121) entered the randomized maintenance phase: placebo + antidepressant vs. esketamine + antidepressant until relapse or up to 9 months
- Result: **continuing esketamine + antidepressant significantly delayed time to relapse**

Ketamine
vs.
Esketamine



McIntyre RS et al., *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 2021

*“For unipolar major depression, the efficacy of **esketamine and ketamine appear to be comparable.** However, **no head-to-head trials** comparing the two drugs have been published.”*

IV Ketamine: pros and cons

Pros:

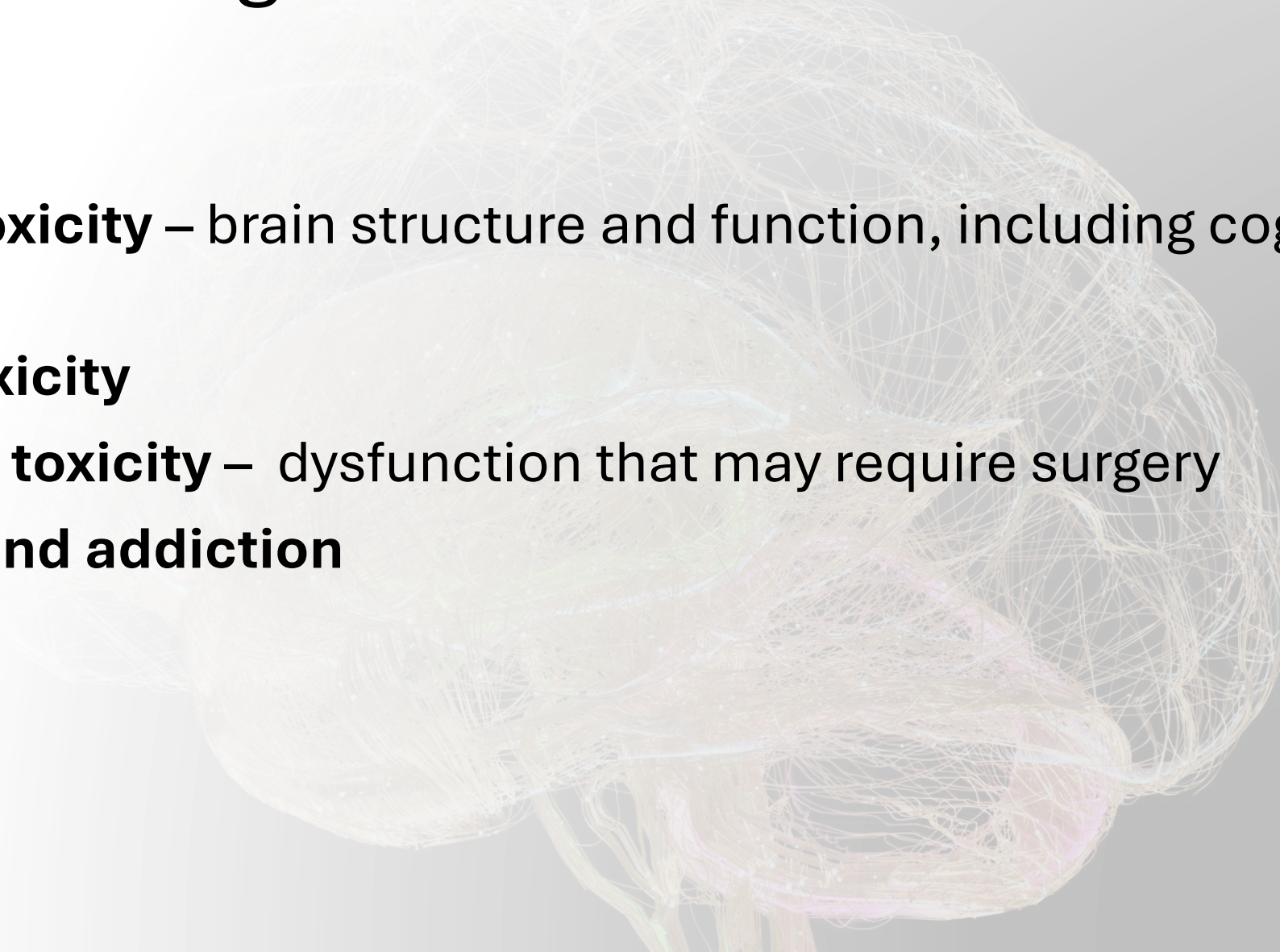
- Powerful, fast acting – possibly more beneficial for severe or urgent depression
- Flexible dosing; can be tailored (slower infusions, dose titration)
- May be more accessible where Spravato infrastructure/coverage is limited

Cons:

- Off-label; no REMS or standardized national protocol
- Potentially greater hemodynamic swings
- Potentially deeper dissociation, especially at higher doses
- More concern about abuse/diversion and long-term bladder/liver toxicity, extrapolating from high-dose/recreational literature
- Less long-term safety data

Risks of Long-term Treatment with Ketamine

- **Neurotoxicity** – brain structure and function, including cognitive function
- **Hepatotoxicity**
- **Bladder toxicity** – dysfunction that may require surgery
- **Abuse and addiction**



Spravato: pros and cons

Pros:

- FDA-approved for depression; **standardized doses & schedule**
- REMS restricts use to monitored settings → lowers diversion and serious-event risk
- **Very large real-world safety dataset** now supports a **predictable, mostly transient SE profile** (sedation, dissociation, modest BP rises).
- Side effects are expected, occur commonly, time-limited, and not typically dangerous
- **Covered by most insurance**

Cons:

- Same ketamine-class issues in susceptible patients (BP, dissociation, abuse potential)
- Label contraindications limit patients with vascular/ICH history
- Repeated, long-term use will presumably lead to similar issues associated with ketamine

Resources for Treatment

Wheeler Health – Esketamine Therapy: 860-793-3500 (Hartford, Waterbury)

Silver Hill Hospital - Ketamine Treatment Program: 866-542-4455

Greenwich Hospital – Esketamine and Ketamine Therapy: 844-228-5078

Middlesex Hospital – Esketamine Therapy: 860-358-6882

Yale New Haven Hospital – Esketamine and Ketamine Therapy: 844-228-5078

McLean Hospital - Ketamine Service: 617-826-8144 (Belmont), 508-443-6443 (Middleborough)

Massachusetts General/Brigham Hospital – Ketamine Clinic for Depression: 617-724-5510

Hartford Hospital The Institute of Living – Esketamine Treatment: 860-545-7862

UCONN John Dempsey Hospital – Esketamine Therapy: 860-679-3396

Waterbury Hospital – Esketamine Therapy: 203-573-6756



References

1. Berman RM et al. (2000). Antidepressant effects of ketamine in depressed patients. *Biol Psychiatry*.
2. Zarate CA Jr et al. (2006). A randomized trial of an NMDA antagonist in treatment-resistant major depression. *Arch Gen Psychiatry*.
3. Murrough JW et al. (2013). Antidepressant efficacy of ketamine in TRD: a two-site randomized controlled trial. *Am J Psychiatry*.
4. Murrough JW et al. (2013). Rapid and longer-term antidepressant effects of repeated ketamine infusions in TRD. *Biol Psychiatry*.
5. Lapidus KAB et al. (2014). A randomized controlled trial of intranasal ketamine in major depressive disorder. *Biol Psychiatry*.
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