

# Review of the monograph by D.S. Danilov “History of antidepressants. Book one: Irreversible non-selective monoamine oxidase inhibitors”



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The monograph systematizes the history of irreversible nonselective monoamine oxidase inhibitors, the first group of antidepressants that became available to doctors. It describes in detail the events associated with the development of this group of antidepressants, research of their effects, and their use in clinical practice and experimental conditions, from the start to the present day. So far there haven't been any such books either in Russia or abroad, since their preparation requires long and painstaking work. The author is planning to publish a series of monographs devoted to the history of different groups of antidepressants and other classes of psychotropic drugs.

The book is divided into chapters based on the description of one or another issue from the history of irreversible nonselective monoamine oxidase inhibitors in chronological order. Five chapters are devoted to the history of creation of drugs of this group. In four chapters the history of the study of their action mechanism is analyzed. Eight chapters cover the history of research into effectiveness of these drugs for patients with depression. Three chapters highlight the history of their use in nonaffective mental illnesses, including neurotic disorders. Two chapters give an idea of the history of their use in somatic pathology. In five chapters the author analyzes the history of assessment of side effects and treatment complications. Two chapters systematize the history of the concept of the possibility of combination therapy. It is especially worth noting that the monograph contains a chapter devoted to the history of the use of irreversible nonselective monoamine oxidase inhibitors in the USSR, Russia, and other post-Soviet countries. It should be noted that the book is well-structured and written in a clear, accessible, not excessively scientific style.

The book contains a description of many interesting facts. For example, it may come as a surprise to some that a number of irreversible nonselective monoamine oxidase inhibitors are still used successfully in some countries in Europe and North America. Data on the effectiveness of the therapy in atypical and resistant depression deserve attention. Noteworthy is the description of a rather heated modern debate between specialists about the degree of danger/safety of this group of antidepressants used as monotherapy and in combination with other monoaminergic agents. The analysis of the history of use of this drug group in neurological pathology is interesting and indicates

that irreversible nonselective monoamine oxidase inhibitors were the first antidepressants used for pain syndrome. The description of modern attempts to create new drugs of this group also deserves attention.

In addition to systematizing the history of irreversible nonselective monoamine oxidase inhibitors, the publication gives retrospections devoted to important general psychiatric and even general medical issues. For example, the author highlights facts from the history of the development of basic principles of evidence-based medicine. Noteworthy is the detailed analysis of the development of the concepts of atypical and resistant depression. Systematization of the history of the formation of monoaminergic theory of depression pathogenesis also deserves attention. An excursion into the history of the emergence of the concept of “cognitive impairment” in patients with depression is amazing. Of interest is the analysis of “differences in the process of studying the effects of these drugs in capitalist countries and countries of the socialist bloc”, “differences in approaches to discussing the results of scientific research in different countries”, and “transformation of the methodology for conducting domestic clinical trials”. The description of the history of the use of the term “a generic drug” is noteworthy. The undoubted merit of the book is examples illustrating the involvement of members of non-medical community (celebrities, legal authorities, and government bodies) in the history of irreversible nonselective monoamine oxidase inhibitors.

The monograph will be of interest to a wide audience of readers: psychiatrists, neurologists, general practitioners, anesthesiologists, pharmacologists, pharmacists, especially those who are taking their first steps in the profession, and even for non-medical community. The need for such a publication is obvious. Reading the monograph not only allows to understand how the history of irreversible nonselective monoamine oxidase inhibitor antidepressants developed, but also how the idea of the possibility of treating mental disorders changed, and modern practical recommendations for the use of psychotropic drugs were formed. It is amazing that some parts of the monograph are translated into English. This will undoubtedly contribute to the popularization of Russian science abroad.

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