3-253 Antidepressant losing efficacy

TIPS Question:

Do antidepressants start to lose their effect after someone has been on them for a long period of time, i.e. after 4-5 years? And if yes, should you increase the dosage or switch the antidepressant? Or combine 2 different kinds?

Response:

In order to maintain a person on an antidepressant for 4-5 years you need to assess and document the symptoms and signs for its use periodically. Normally they have no tolerance problem like benzodiazepines, however the depression may take a different presentation altogether with development of new stresses or environmental factors.

Consider increasing, switching or augmenting; a specialist opinion may be warranted.

Please note: *TIPS information should be used similar to the way you would use information from a text book! TIPS is not intended to serve as an individual consultation service! P.I.E.C.E.S. participants should use this information in context and always work closely with the family physician involved in the care of the resident or client and with other Partners In Care to find solutions to individual resident/client issues.*