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Isotretinoin probably not associated with depression

While original trials of isotretinoin did not assess depression as an outcome, the teenage years are the peak for acne and depression, so a correlation is possible.

In this study of an international cohort, the authors compared patients (mean age 21.8 years) on isotretinoin versus those on antibiotics in terms of mental health outcomes.¹

Patients prescribed isotretinoin experienced a lower risk of depression (hazard ratio [HR], 0.90; 95% [CI], 0.87-0.93; P =0 .001) but a similar risk of major depressive disorder. The risk of suicidal attempts was similar between groups despite the elevated risk of suicidal ideation in those under isotretinoin (HR, 1.41; 95% CI, 1.32-1.50; P 0.001). Patients on isotretinoin had a lower risk of post-traumatic stress disorder anxiety, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and adjustment disorder.

Mood should be monitored in adolescents as routine and not because they are on isotretinoin.

Reference:

1. [Isotretinoin and the risk of psychiatric disturbances: A global study shedding new light on a debatable story](#) J Am Acad Dermatol (2023)

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