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## Antidepressants and Age

by David G. Blanchflower, Andrew J. Oswald  
(June 2011)

### Abstract:

Antidepressants as a commodity have been remarkably little-studied by economists. This study shows in new data for 27 European countries that 8% of people (and 10% of those middle-aged) take antidepressants each year. The probability of antidepressant use is greatest among those who are middle-aged, female, unemployed, poorly educated, and divorced or separated. A hill-shaped age pattern is found. The adjusted probability of using antidepressants reaches a peak – approximately doubling – in people’s late 40s. This finding is consistent with, and provides a new and independent form of corroboration of, recent claims in the research literature that human well-being follows a U-shape through life.

**Text:** See [Discussion Paper No. 5785](#)



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