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## Lamotrigine for bipolar depression?

In reading Dr. Nasrallah's August 2022 editorial ("Reversing depression: A plethora of therapeutic strategies and mechanisms," CURRENT PSYCHIATRY, August 2022, p. 4-6), I was curious why he did not mention lamotrigine as an adjunctive therapy for bipolar

depression. Was that an editing error, or an important statement about the questionable value of that drug for current, ongoing bipolar depression?

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### Dr. Nasrallah responds

Thanks for your message. Lamotrigine is not FDA-approved for bipolar or unipolar depression, either as monotherapy or as an adjunctive therapy. It has never been approved for mania, either (no efficacy at all). Its only FDA-approved psychiatric indication is maintenance therapy after a patient with bipolar I disorder emerges from mania with the help of one of the antimanic drugs. Yet many

clinicians may perceive lamotrigine as useful for bipolar depression because more than 20 years ago the manufacturer sponsored several small studies (not FDA trials). Two studies that showed efficacy were published, but 4 other studies that failed to show efficacy were not published. As a result, many clinicians got the false impression that lamotrigine is an effective antidepressant. I hope this explains why lamotrigine was not included in the list of antidepressants in my editorial.

**Henry A. Nasrallah, MD**  
Editor-In-Chief

#### Disclosures

The author reports no financial relationships with any companies whose products are mentioned in his letter, or with manufacturers of competing products.

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