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Greater baseline subjective attentional complaints predict poorer 8-week antidepressant response in late-life depression

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Introduction: Late-life depression (LLD) is characterized by subjective dysexecutive complaints, which are associated with poor antidepressant response. The relationship between other subjective cognitive complaints and antidepressant response is less clear. This may be particularly relevant for subjective attentional complaints, which are a diagnostic criterion for Major Depressive Disorder and may underlie some executive processes. **Methods:** Eighty-eight adults with LLD were recruited and underwent an 8-week antidepressant trial. Subjective cognitive complaints were assessed via attention (Attentional Control Scale (ACS), WHODAS 2.0, domain 1) and broad-based cognitive (PROMIS) measures. Antidepressant response was determined via change in MADRS from baseline to week 8. Separate linear regressions examined these relationships, controlling for age, sex, baseline MADRS, and treatment arm. **Results:** Greater baseline attentional (ACS and WHODAS), but not general cognition, complaints were significantly associated with less improvement in MADRS scores. Follow-up ACS analyses found that change in MADRS was significantly related to attentional shifting, but not focusing, complaints. **Conclusion:** It is important to assess for subjective attentional complaints in LLD, as their presence at baseline may predict poor treatment response. Further research is needed to better understand the relationship between subjective and objective attention in LLD, their relationship with various outcomes, and underlying mechanisms.

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