

# Expert Consensus of Antidepressant Continuation in Critical Care Patients

Jovan K. Gill, B.Sc, B.Sc.(Pharm); Jessica E. Beach, B.Sc.(Pharm), ACPR, PharmD; Sean K. Gorman, B.Sc.(Pharm), ACPR, PharmD; Nunzio Barone, B.Sc.(Pharm), ACPR

## Background

- Antidepressants are commonly prescribed medications in the community with 6% of Canadians on an antidepressant (AD)
- When abruptly stopped, patients are at high risk of withdrawal symptoms and potentially increased risk of ICU delirium
- Currently, there is minimal literature available to guide the use of antidepressants in critical care patients

## Objectives

### Primary

- To develop expert consensus on key factors around temporary discontinuation of antidepressants in critical care patients

### Secondary

- To seek consensus on research foci addressing antidepressant management issues in critically ill patients

## Methods

### Design

- 3-round, web-based, modified Delphi consensus survey

### Setting, Sampling, Timeframe

- Representation of critical care pharmacists across Canada
- Purposive sampling targeting 10-15 expert panelists
- Modified Delphi occurred February-April 2019

### Expert Panel Inclusion Criteria

Canadian critical care pharmacists who have met one of:

- Completed a pharmacy practice residency or other advanced degree in pharmacy and been practicing at least 50% of their time over last 2 years in critical care units (medical, surgical, trauma, burns and plastics)
- At least 5 years of direct patient care in a medical, surgical, trauma or burns and plastics critical care setting

### Antidepressant Discontinuation Parameters Generation

- Patient-Related Parameters
- Condition-Related Parameters
- Treatment-Related Parameters
- Practical Parameters

### Survey Instrument

- Scope of project was limited to SSRI/SNRIs
- All parameters rated by each panelist on 9-point Likert scale
- Panelists could suggest additional AD discontinuation parameters or research foci in round-1

## Methods

### Antidepressant Discontinuation Criteria Consensus

- Consensus definition:  $\geq 75\%$  of panelists score candidate parameter 7-9 on Likert Scale (determined after round-3)

### Consensus Building Process

- Panelists required to review document of study overview, procedures, expectations and evidence summary table prior to round-1
- Overall panel and individual panelist ratings for each antidepressant discontinuation parameter provided to all panelists between each round

### Overall Consensus Criteria

- If a critical care patient has this specific criteria/is experiencing this specific criteria, antidepressant therapy should be temporarily discontinued
- This research foci should be a priority research focus to guide future practice related to chronic antidepressant management in critically ill patients

Table 1. Delphi Panelist Characteristics

Characteristic	n (%)
<b>n = 15</b>	
Hospital Bed Size	
101-300	1 (6.7)
301-500	6 (40)
>500	8 (53.3)
Location of Institution	
NB	2 (13.3)
QC	2 (13.3)
ON	4 (26.7)
SK	1 (6.7)
AB	1 (6.7)
BC	5 (33.3)
Adult Patient's Characteristics	
Medical Critically Ill	15 (100)
Surgical Critically Ill	14 (93.3)
Surgical ICU Trauma	6 (40)
Neurocritically Ill	8 (53.3)
Burns & Plastics	4 (26.7)
Years of Experience in ICU	
0-5	5 (33.3)
6-10	5 (33.3)
11-15	2 (13.3)
>15	3 (20)
Highest Level of Education	
B.Sc.(Pharm)	1 (6.7)
ACPR	1 (6.7)
PharmD (post-grad)	10 (66.7)
Masters in Clinical Pharmacy	1 (6.7)
PhD in Clinical Pharmacy	1 (6.7)
Other	1 (6.7)
Experiential Rotations Offered	
B.Sc. Or E2P PharmD	13 (83.3)
PharmD/Working Profess.	10 (66.7)
ACPR	12 (80)

Figure 1. Study Flow Diagram

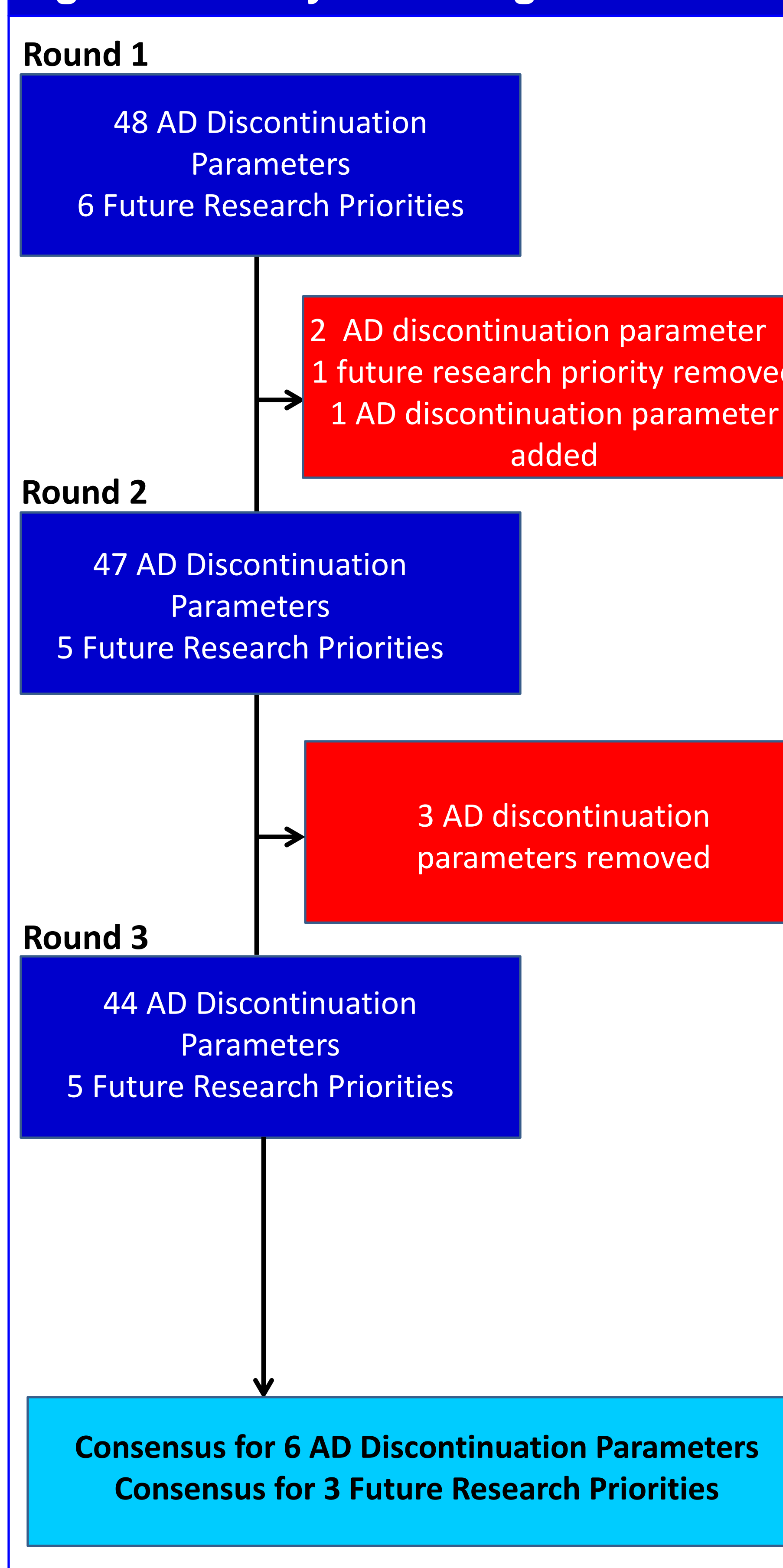
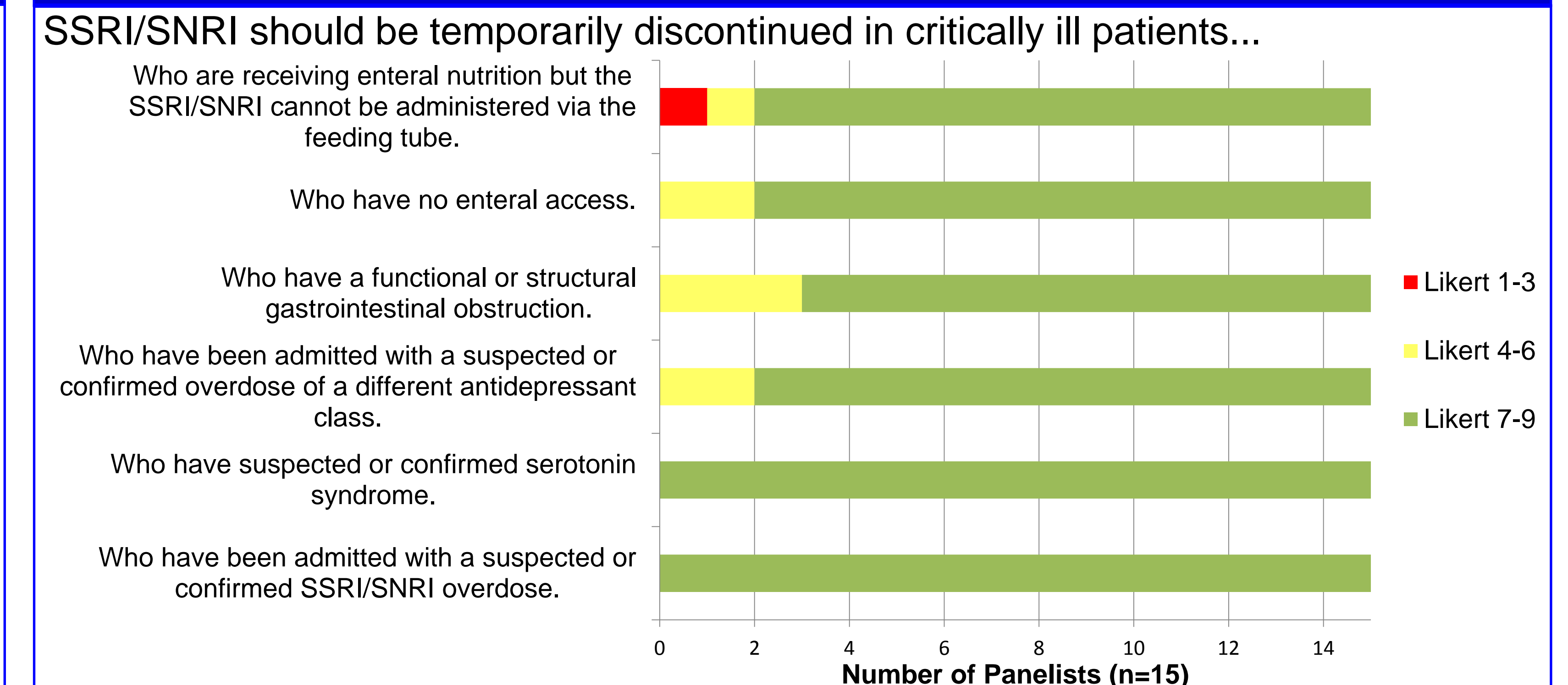


Figure 2. Consensus of AD Discontinuation Parameters



Examples of Parameters Not Reaching Consensus

SSRI/SNRI should be temporarily discontinued in critically ill patients...

### Patient-Related Parameters

- Who are 65 years of age or older
- Who are expected to die in the ICU

### Condition-Related Parameters

- Who are experiencing a clinically important bleed

### Treatment-Related Parameters

- Who are receiving QTc prolonging medications
- Who are receiving linezolid

### Practical Parameters

- If it is not on your hospital formulary

## Discussion

### Strengths

- Complete survey response for all 3 rounds
- Representative panel of expert critical care pharmacists from across Canada

### Limitations

- Few parameters met consensus
- No representation of ICU physicians, psychiatrists, nurses or patient opinions
- Questionnaire was limited to SSRI/SNRI, cannot apply results to all AD classes

### Future Initiatives/Research

- Implementing and evaluating discontinuation parameters on patient outcomes while in the ICU and post-ICU stay
- ICU physician agreement with consensus criteria for discontinuation determined in this study.

## Conclusion

Six AD discontinuation, and three future research priorities reached consensus. This may indicate a large variability in practice across Canada and highlights the lack of consensus around AD continuation in critically ill patients.

