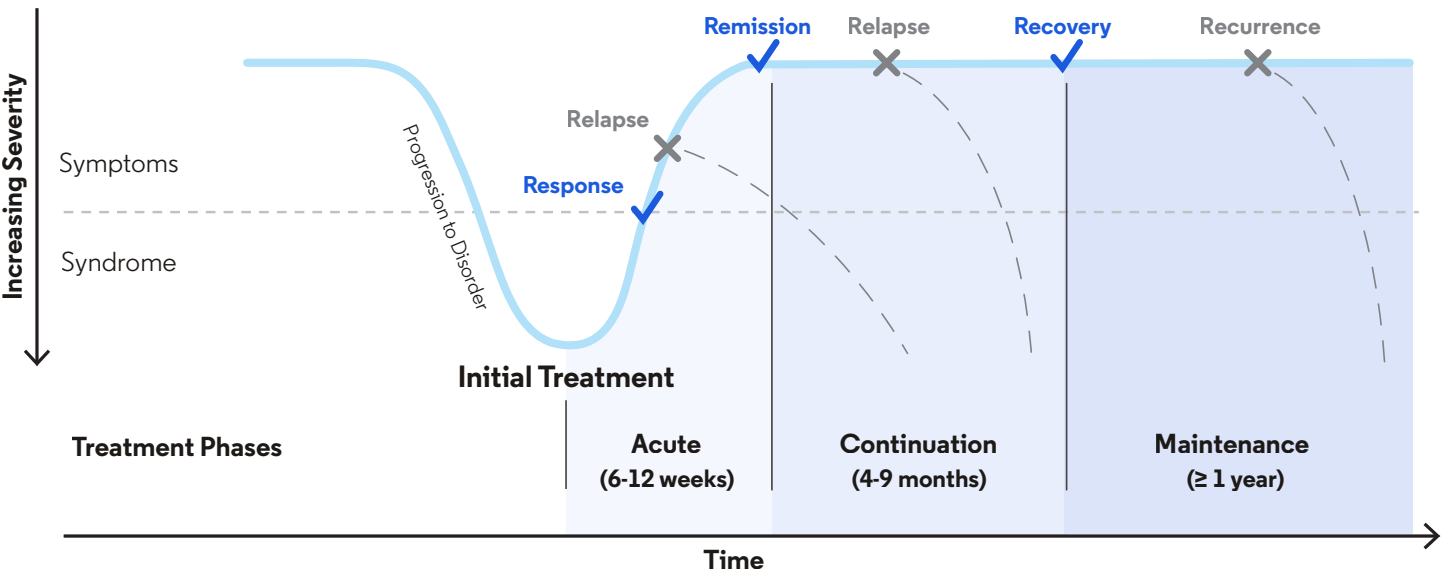


PRIMARY CARE INSIGHTS

Major Depressive Disorder (MDD):
The Course of Illness At-A-Glance

The Course of Illness in MDD: Kupfer Model¹⁻³



Clinical Continuum
of MDD: the 5 R’s⁴

- Response:** meaningful but incomplete improvement
- Remission:** achievement of validated symptom-based treatment targets
- Recovery:** signals the end of an episode after sustained remission
- Relapse:** symptom return before recovery is achieved
- Recurrence:** a new episode during recovery, distinct from the symptom return of a previous episode

Response & Remission Clinically Defined

A partial response may reflect meaningful symptom improvement, but **remission is the ultimate treatment goal.**⁵

If validated remission thresholds have not been reached, patients may remain at risk for relapse, even if they report feeling “better” at follow-up.⁵

In a prospective 2-year follow-up study of adults with MDD (N = 183), the **relapse rate was 67.6% among patients who did not achieve remission compared with 15.2% among those who achieved remission.**⁵

Response ⁶	Remission ⁷⁻¹¹
Adequate, partial, and inadequate responses are defined by the percent reduction from baseline in symptom severity using a validated clinical rating scale.*⁶ Adequate Response ≥50% reduction Partial Response ≥25 to <50% reduction Inadequate Response <25% reduction	Remission is achieved when symptoms remain at or below a specified threshold on a validated clinical rating scale for at least 2 consecutive weeks.*^{4,7-9} <i>Note: remission threshold definitions may vary depending on the source consulted.</i> PHQ-9 score ≈ <5 MADRS total score ≈ ≤10-12 CGI-S score ≈1

*Validated clinical rating scales include PHQ-9, a self-administered practical screening tool, and MADRS and CGI-S, which are clinician-administered and used primarily in the context of clinical trials.^{12,13}

CGI-S, Clinical Global Impression-Severity scale; MADRS, Montgomery-Åsberg Depression Rating Scale; PHQ-9, 9-item Patient Health Questionnaire

Residual Symptoms Clinically Defined

In a study of US adults with a confirmed MDD diagnosis who were in remission (N = 943), >90% retained at least one residual symptom.¹⁴ Residual symptoms may leave patients at risk for relapse.⁴

Across multiple studies of patients with MDD, a 2024 narrative review identified **the five most frequently reported residual symptoms** from patient and clinician perspectives:¹⁵

Patient-Reported

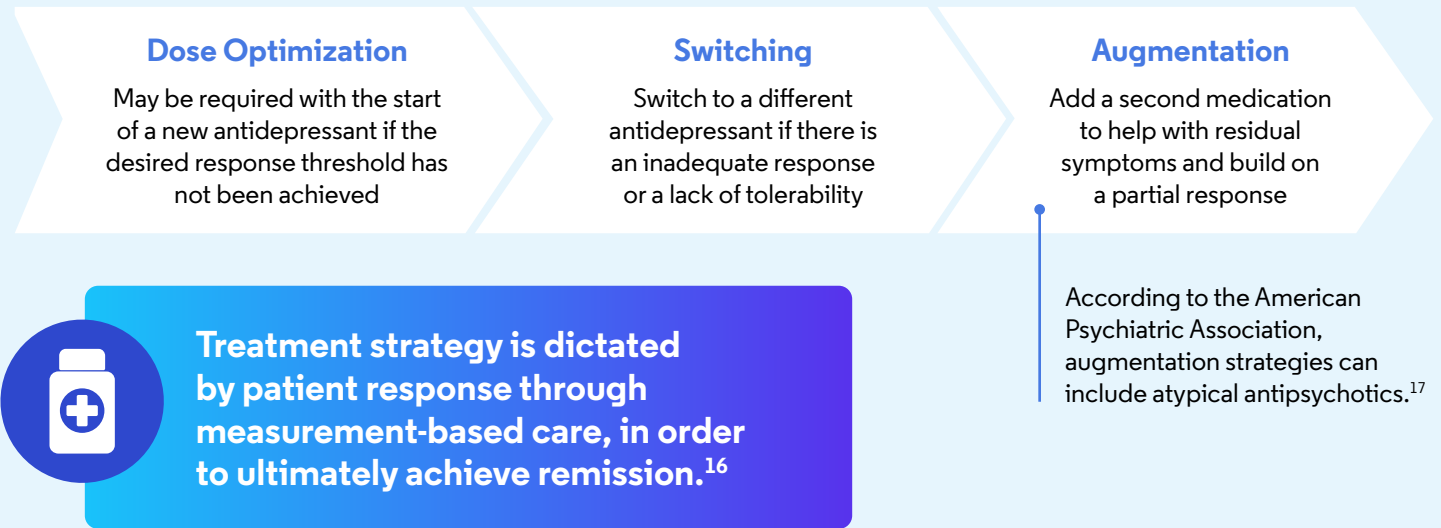
- Weight gain
 - Sleep disturbances
 - Low mood
- Decreased concentration
 - Decreased energy

Clinician-Rated

- Sleep disturbances
 - Anxiety symptoms
 - Somatic symptoms
- Low mood
 - Feeling of guilt

Implications for MDD Management¹⁴

Clinicians have three broad pharmacologic strategies available to address a lack of response, including increasing the dose of the current antidepressant, switching to a different antidepressant, and augmenting with a second antidepressant or non-antidepressant medication.¹⁶



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