Choice of Treatment Modalities for Major Depressive Disorder

1. Should a specific effective psychotherapy be provided?
   - Mild-to-moderate depression: preferred as solo treatment or in combination
   - Moderate-to-severe depression: in combination with medication or ECT if psychosocial issues are important and/or if preferred

2. Should medication be provided?
   - Mild depression: if preferred as solo treatment
   - Moderate-to-severe depression: with or without a specific effective psychotherapy unless ECT is planned
   - Psychotic depression: combination of antipsychotic medication and antidepressant medication, or ECT

3. Should medication and a specific effective psychotherapy both be provided?
   - Mild depression: if preferred as combination treatment
   - History of partial response to single modality
   - Poor compliance
   - Moderate-to-severe depression:
     - Prominent psychosocial issues
     - Interpersonal problems
     - Personality disorder
     - Poor compliance

4. Should ECT be provided?
   - Chronic, moderate-to-severe depression: with or without a specific effective psychotherapy if patient prefers
   - Severe depression and any of the following:
     - Psychotic features
     - Patient prefers
     - Previous preferential response, need of rapid antidepressant response, intolerance of medication

Go to Other Treatment Considerations

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Abbreviation: ECT = electroconvulsive therapy.