

## Guideline 10: Generalized Anxiety Disorder

### 10A. Diagnosis of Generalized Anxiety Disorder<sup>Question 8</sup>

The features that the experts considered most important in diagnosing generalized anxiety disorder in an older patient agree closely with the DSM-IV criteria. The experts considered excessive anxiety and worry that occur more days than not for at least 6 months the most important discriminating feature.

(*bold italics* = features rated “extremely important” by at least 50% of the experts)

Most important discriminating features	Also consider
<p><b><i>Excessive anxiety and worry that occur more days than not for at least 6 months</i></b></p> <p>The person finds it hard to control the anxiety and worry</p> <p>The worry is accompanied by a feeling of restlessness or being keyed up</p>	<p>No evidence that the patient has recently used drugs (e.g., excessive caffeine intake) that can cause anxiety</p> <p>Workup rules out a medical illness (e.g., hyperthyroidism) that could be causing the anxiety</p> <p>The person has difficulty concentrating (mind going blank)</p> <p>Presence of muscle tension</p> <p>Sleep disturbance (difficulty falling or staying asleep, restless unsatisfying sleep)</p> <p>The person becomes easily fatigued</p>

### 10B. Selecting Treatments for Generalized Anxiety Disorder<sup>Question 22</sup>

The experts recommended an antidepressant for the treatment of generalized anxiety disorder (a very high second-line option rated first line by 67% of the experts). Other high second-line options were a benzodiazepine, CBT, or the combination of an antidepressant and a benzodiazepine. The experts did not recommend the use of an antipsychotic to treat generalized anxiety disorder.

Preferred	Also consider
An antidepressant*	<p>A benzodiazepine</p> <p>Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)</p> <p>An antidepressant plus a benzodiazepine</p>

\*Very high second line.