selective serotonin uptake re inhibitors and tricyclic antide pres sants were reached in a Cochrane review.2

We believe that these results help in the understanding of eating disorders. Anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa seem to represent 2 distinct disorders, indicated by the responsiveness of bulimia nervosa to antidepressant drugs.3 Because major depressive disorder or obsessive-compulsive disorder were not explicit exclusion criteria in Walsh et al,1 it would therefore be helpful to know what percentage of the patients in this study fulfilled standard criteria for either disorder as comorbidities to anorexia nervosa.

In addition, lack of efficacy of one class of drugs does not mean inefficacy of drug treatment for anorexia nervosa in general. Walsh et al1 propose clinical studies using atypical antipsychotics such as olanzapine. Despite reports of beneficial effects for olanzapine,4 it may be preferable to use atypical antipsychotics that do not result in weight gain, such as ziprasidone and aripiprazole.

Michael Dettling, MD
michael.dettling@charite.de
Carolin Opgen-Rhein, MD
Arnim Quante
Ion Anghelescu, MD
Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy
Charité-University Medicine Berlin
Berlin, Germany

Financial Disclosures: None reported.


In Reply: Dr Dettling and colleagues request information about psychiatric comorbidity in the study participants. Diagnoses based on structured interviews were available for 92 of the 93 patients. At the time of randomization, 11 (12.0%) met criteria for a major depressive disorder and 12 (13.0%) met criteria for obsessive-compulsive disorder. These numbers were too small to permit any meaningful statistical analysis and, therefore, were not reported in the article. We concur with the need for additional studies of other pharmacological agents for patients with this challenging illness.

B. Timothy Walsh, MD
btwl@columbia.edu
Christina A. Roberto, BA
Department of Psychiatry
College of Physicians & Surgeons of Columbia University
New York, NY
Allan S. Kaplan, MD, FRCPC
Wendi Rockert, MEd
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario

Financial Disclosures: Dr Walsh has reported receiving research support from Eli Lilly and Co, Abbott Laboratories, Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceuticals, and GlaxoSmithKline. Dr Kaplan has reported receiving research support from Eli Lilly and Co. No other authors reported disclosures.