

# Use of Antidepression Medicine For Young Patients Has Soared

## To Bolster Market, Makers Seek F.D.A. Sanction

By BARBARA STRAUCH

The Long Island girl is nearly 15 years old, and she has been taking Prozac since she was 5.

Before Prozac, she was a mess. She could not be left alone, even for minutes. Strangers terrified her, and she was obsessed by thoughts that her parents were dying or burglars were breaking into her house. Conventional therapy failed, said the girl's mother, who spoke on the con-

dition that she and her daughter not be identified.

But after taking Prozac, the girl was transformed. Today, she is in her school's honors program.

In the decade the girl has taken Prozac — now in its 10th year on the market and the most popular antidepressant ever in the United States — the drug was never approved for children. No antidepressant has ever been formally cleared for children or adolescents.

But that could be about to change. The drug company that makes Prozac, Eli Lilly, recently submitted data on the drug to the Food and Drug Administration in an effort to have it approved for children. The agency has asked for more information.

Companies making similar new antidepressants, most of which regulate mood by adjusting the brain chemical serotonin, are gathering information and conducting pediatric studies in hopes of getting Federal approval for use of their drugs in children.

SmithKline Beecham is analyzing results from two large studies of its drug, Paxil, on adolescents. The Bristol-Myers Squibb Company is doing a trial of Serzone and the American Home Products Corporation is testing Effexor.

F.D.A. approval is, in fact, not necessary. Once the agency approves a drug for sale, doctors can prescribe it to anyone for any purpose. So the new medications have quietly flowed into the children's market.

But the agency's approval of an antidepressant for children would be a tremendous marketing lift for the

New prescriptions or recommendations by doctors for prescriptions for three of the most common antidepressants.

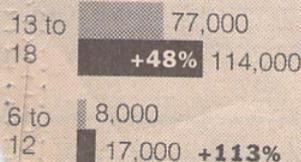
### AGES PROZAC



### ZOLOFT



### PAXIL



Source: IMS America