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## SAFFRON (*Crocus sativus* L.) AS A PROSPECTIVE AND SAFE NATURAL TREATMENT FOR MENTAL DISORDERS

Pavlo Lykhovyd\*

\*Institute of Irrigated Agriculture of NAAS, PostDoc, Kherson 73483, Ukraine;

\*Corresponding Author Pavlo Lykhovyd, e-mail: [pavel.likhovid@gmail.com](mailto:pavel.likhovid@gmail.com);

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### ABSTRACT

Natural treatment for various health conditions is growing more and more popular since the evidence of greater safety comparing to conventional chemical drugs. Saffron (*Crocus sativus* L.) is a prospective herbal remedy for people suffering from mental disorders and facing health issues with synthetic psychotropic drugs. The number of studies devoted to investigating the efficacy of saffron efficacy in various psychiatric conditions is gradually increasing. It is a need to incorporate the scientific evidence on this herbal agent in the form of a meta-analysis. The objective of this study was to evaluate the real efficacy of saffron in major depressive disorder (MDD), sleep disorders (SD), and anxiety compared to placebo using up-to-date data, available in randomized placebo-controlled trials (RPCT) published in PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science Core Collection journals. Meta-analyses were performed in Meta-Mar using the standardized mean difference (SMD) model using five RPCTs regarding MDD, four on SD, and two – regarding anxiety. The results of the meta-analyses proved that saffron is significantly superior to placebo for all the studied mental disorders and could be recommended as an alternative for synthetic antidepressants in MDD. More clinical trials are required to surely recommend saffron for the treatment of SD and anxiety-related mental disorders.

**Keywords:** anxiety, depression, herbal remedy, meta-analysis, natural drug, sleep disorder.