

# CASE STUDY: SPRAVATO®

## VA Research Underpins Globally Available Depression Treatment



Esketamine nasal spray (Spravato®) provides rapid symptom relief for patients with treatment-resistant depression who have not responded to conventional antidepressants. Based on U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) research, Spravato® is now improving outcomes for veterans and patients across the globe.

### CHALLENGE

Depression affects an estimated 280 million people worldwide. Treatment-resistant depression, defined as failure to respond to two or more medications, leaves patients with limited options.

At the VA Medical Center in Little Rock, Arkansas, Dr. John Spollen observed rising depression severity among veterans despite ongoing care. Patients tried multiple medications, often waiting weeks to see results. The VA needed a faster-acting, more effective treatment.

### FEATURED PARTNER

**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

### OPPORTUNITY

**64%** improvement in 24 hours during testing

VA research into ketamine-based therapies demonstrated rapid antidepressant effects, with patients showing significant improvement within 24 hours.

The advancement of esketamine was driven by collaboration across federal agencies, academic institutions, and industry. Researchers at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Yale University, and the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai co-developed the patented technology. VA research and clinical studies validated its effectiveness. Through technology transfer, Johnson & Johnson licensed the technology, enabling large-scale clinical trials and commercial release.

**“Ketamine for depression is the most impactful new psychiatric treatment I have seen. People routinely tell me it has been life-changing for them. It doesn’t work for everyone, but for those that it does, it is usually a dramatic difference.”**

DR. JOHN SPOLLEN, LEAD PSYCHIATRIST,  
VA MEDICAL CENTER, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

### TECH TRANSFER IN ACTION

- VA conducts clinical research on ketamine-based therapies
- NIH, Yale, and Mount Sinai researchers co-develop esketamine technology
- Johnson & Johnson licenses the patented technology
- Johnson & Johnson conducts clinical trials
- FDA approves Spravato®, enabling global distribution

### RESULTS

**140K+** patients treated

Through collaboration, esketamine advanced from early research to the globally available depression treatment Spravato®. Now approved in 77 countries, Spravato® has been used to treat more than 140,000 patients.

In 2019, Dr. Spollen established the first ketamine clinic at the Little Rock VA, a model that has since expanded to 25 VA medical centers nationwide and delivered measurable reductions in depression severity and suicidal ideation among veterans.

TechLink is the authorized national technology transfer partner for the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We are federally funded to facilitate technology transfer partnerships between federal labs and private industry. We work with companies of all sizes to find commercial potential in technologies developed in DOD and VA labs.

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