

PE1494/S

Further Contribution to the discussion of Petition 01494

Dr. Thomas Leonard

Further to my comments in PE1494A, I very much agree with Hunter Watson that the evidence so admirably collected by the Petitions Committee suggests, with scant purposeful or adequate response, that consultant psychiatrists in Scotland behave irresponsibly towards their patients. This is in respect to both inept diagnoses (e.g. they frequently ignore symptoms which indicate that the disorder may be totally physical, or stress-related, or simply resulting from a real-life crisis) and harsh modes of treatment e.g. E.C.T. and strong psychiatric medications with all-too-frequent debilitating side effects. Up to a million Scots may well be suffering from these treatments. The psychiatrists' activities therefore need to be seriously curtailed from outside the medical profession.

Quite surprisingly, yoga is thought by many to be a better treatment for bipolar disorder, when compared with Epilim Chrono (the 'thalidomide of the future') and other purportedly mood destabilising medications. Other valid holistic treatments include psychodynamic therapy, exercise and support programs, occupational therapy, and some herbal or milder medications.

Emergency action by the Scottish Government is needed to fund more frequent efficient treatment by harmless cognitive therapies, together much more scientific research into the development and improvement of holistic therapies. While such funding is currently woefully lacking, it would make excellent financial sense in relation to the immense amount of NHS funding and resources which are currently needlessly wasted while treating the physical side effects of psychiatric medications.

Unfortunately, researchers in psychiatry seem to have other ideas for the future, The profession is seeking solutions in the areas of genetics and neurosciences, and has more harmful treatments, including brain surgery, genetic engineering, and even more severe medications in mind. This raises a spectre where vast swathes of our population will be living a 'Dr.Who' type existence, and existing like 'Borg' or other medical freaks in a parallel Universe.

As an active and still publishing Bayesian statistician, with an interest in a range of application areas, I am well aware of the misleading subjectivity inherent in the subject areas of genetics, Genomics, and neurosciences, much of which is based upon scientifically false assumption. I envision a future where patients are diagnosed on a quasi-scientific whim as possessing some 'psychiatric disorder' and then treated entirely inappropriately and made to suffer.

My colleague, the noted human rights campaigner Chrys Muirhead, has kindly sent me the quote

There will be justice---when those who are not injured are as outraged as those who are (Thucylides)

This quote is particularly apt when treatment by ECT is under consideration. While the cognitive defects of ECT were not properly investigated by any retrospective study before 2007, it is now becoming increasingly well known (though sometimes ineptly challenged by the psychiatrists and health administrators) that ECT routinely causes substantial cognitive defects, and indeed routinely destroys a significant proportions of the patients' brain cells.

Moreover, many patients are effectively tortured during the administration of ECT. While short term benefits are frequently claimed (I believe in quite outrageous fashion), I would like to suggest that this is because patients are frequently turned into 'sheep' or 'vegetables' by the ECT, and therefore genuinely imagine that they have been well-treated.