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Anonymous submission of 2 July 2018

I'm writing to share my own personal experience with psychoactive medications which stole five years of my life (and counting), my health, half a million dollars in income, my dignity, personal relationships including with immediate family members, my sanity, my memory and hope.

In 2011, on the heels of requesting hormone replacement therapy (HRT) at the age of 35 to offset the symptoms of premature ovarian failure, I had severe depression and anxiety. I had several other things going on in life that played into my condition including poor diet, lack of exercise, a high stress job with long hours, recent smoking cessation (another potential cause of depression), loss of important friendships, and candida overgrowth. Essentially, I was ripe for a meltdown. And, as everyone has been told to do by commercials, friends, family and doctors, I asked for help in the form of medication. I was given the first of 8 medications, an antidepressant. My life has not been the same since. What followed was two years of frequent trips to the doctor, rapid medication changes, inability to sleep, increasing depression and anxiety, symptoms like dementia, inability to regulate body temperature, extreme gastrointestinal dysregulation, inability to concentrate, extreme lack of emotional control, flooding, pain in my feet, rapid weight gain, sensitivity to light and sound, extreme irritability, suicidal ideation and, on one medication, homicidal thoughts and so much more. At one point I had an extremely high temperature following yet another medication change. It went on for three weeks but the doctors couldn't figure out what was wrong. Looking back with the knowledge you gain only from severe pharmaceutical damage, I know that was Serotonin Syndrome that could have killed me. It went unrecognized by the many medical professionals who were seen in my attempt to regain my health as did all the other severe side effects that are clearly listed on the medications that were prescribed to me.

In 2013, I was fired from my position as Controller (accountant). I had been unable to function in my position for months. I was a danger to myself and others driving to and from that company each day. While at work I drooled while staring at my computer unable to comprehend a thing I was looking at and unable to deal with the frequent interactions I had with staff and management alike. I needed to be fired. I thought I would then be able to find the help I needed to get myself back to me. I immediately scheduled an appointment with an emergency psychiatric nurse practitioner who labeled me as Bipolar II. She quickly discontinued the antidepressant, benzodiazepine and other anti-anxiety medication she had me on which left me sleeping for days in an almost coma like state with the exception of trips to the bathroom. She put me on a "Mood Stabilizer" and, after 2 visits I was forced to find another provider for longterm care.

The next provider literally told me that this new medication would kill me. I tried to go back to the emergency provider to figure out what was going on. She refused to see me again citing her "emergency status" so I was forced to look for yet another provider. At this point, I'm in full blown withdrawals suffering the worst symptoms you can imagine. Brain zaps (just like it sounds), akathisia, explosive diarrhea, insomnia, pain in my feet, light and sound sensitivity, uncontrollable rage, severe

suicidal ideation, anxiety through the roof, the loudest tinnitus you've ever heard, aphasia, deteriorating vision, inability to read and write, histamine intolerance with itching that would make me squirm and cry, and so much more. The next provider was an actual psychiatrist who, after just 45 minutes not taking into account any of my recent drastic medication changes and their absolutely real affects, labeled me Borderline Personality Disorder and wanted yet another medication change.

It was at this point, I realized I was being treated incorrectly for medication side effects and now severe withdrawals. This was not my original condition at all. So I opted to try to get back to my baseline symptoms before being treated further. Sadly, I never returned to that baseline and have suffered most of these symptoms since 2013. I tried again to take another antidepressant in desperation after 8 months off of all medications. It too backfired and left me in worse condition before which I didn't think was possible. It was in May of 2015 that I found people suffering the exact same fate on a Facebook group and my life changed. With the help of these strangers, I was able to find some truth and stop the madness of putting neurotoxic medication into my system that were absolutely making my original condition exponentially worse and adding new symptoms. I started off with depression and anxiety and ended up with Borderline Personality Disorder and ADHD. HOW? I assure you these new conditions were not things I suffered from pre-medication. Those I met online in these forums were people who took some of the same medications I'd been given but they took them for pain and ended up with the same type of mental health symptoms that I am now suffering from. WHY?

As I've finally begun truly healing through careful diet and supplementation absolutely WITHOUT the help of medical professionals, I've been able to research what really happened to me. For me, as it turns out, I have a genetic mutation that makes me a poor metabolizer of medications that are targeted to go through cytochrome P450 CYP2D6. 25% of all medications go through this pathway and these include the vast majority of the psychoactive medications like antidepressants, benzodiazepines and antipsychotics. This means that with even a normal therapeutic dose, my body became toxic from the medication. I'd also been given a drug that's an inhibitor of that pathway. No one caught that the hormone replacement therapy could have caused the initial depression or that the medicine couldn't be metabolized by me or that the combination of drugs I was on could cause metabolization issues. It took 4 years from the beginning of my nightmare for me to even obtain the information about the defect but the doctor who uncovered it still didn't acknowledge the role it played in the damage that was done.

This defect I carry in CYP2D6 is carried by 6-10% of whites, according to data provided by Wikipedia. That means 6-10% of all people using these drugs are at significant risk for the side effects listed on the medication which includes suicide, movement disorders, sexual dysfunction, violent behavior, insomnia, weight problems and so much more that's not even listed. In Scotland in 2016, according to an article by the BBC, about 1 in 8 of **Scots** (12%) take use an **antidepressant** every day.. Your population in 2016 was 5,373,000 which equates to 644,760 taking these medications. If 10% are poor metabolizers, that's 64,476 at high risk for suicide, homicide, and/or complete disability. When is enough enough? And these are just the individuals at the highest risk. Those who don't have this genetic variation are not safe either.

Studies by Dr Peter Gotzsche and Irving Kisch have shown that these medications are no better than placebo in most cases. With the risk being death and complete life devastation, why are these drugs still being used? The answer? Corruption in medicine and in government. People like myself have been trying to get help and have been trying to get our stories heard for years but it's falling on deaf ears while use of these drugs is skyrocketing globally, suicide rates and mental health disability rates are rising right along with them.

Is Scotland going to lead the way and put an end to this madness?