

PE1651/HHHHHHH

Anonymous submission of 19 February 2018

I am writing to share my experience of psychiatry in Scotland. Age 43 I was healthy and holding down a full time job when my husband became ill with cancer. We had 3 children and I was suddenly the sole breadwinner. I was exhausted and couldn't keep up with the pace. My husband's treatment was successful but I fell apart. I asked my GP to refer me for counselling. He sent me to a psychiatrist. That was when life as I knew it ended. A shoulder to cry on, a rest and I would have been fine. A week at a spa would maybe cost £1000. I cannot even begin to tot up the cost of my care since that first appointment.

I was given seroxat (paroxetine) 'this will help', they said. I became obsessively suicidal in a very short time. I was sectioned and after a while taken off seroxat (paroxetine) cold turkey. I knew nothing of withdrawal at that time but now I know that i had severe akathisia, which was diagnosed as severe agitative depression. (Now known to be withdarawl). The next few years were a long round of admissions, drug changes, on and off multiple drugs at an alarming rate.

ECT was in there too, 22 'shots' in total. I didn't 'respond' to anything and was eventually diagnosed with treatment resistant depression. My health went downhill rapidly, breast cancer, bowel cancer, pneumonia, sepsis, arthritis, osteoporosis. I developed hypertension within weeks of starting the drug merry go round.

I have seen the statistics, suicidality from SSRIs only affects young people, WELL IT DOES NOT ONLY AFFECT YOUNG PEOPLE, it can affect ANYONE. Phenelzine made me pile on weight at an alarming rate, 5stone in 3 months. I was told to watch what I eat and everyone blames drugs. It was in fact fluid retention, my kidneys were not functioning and the fluid built up around my heart and lungs. I was dangerously ill and hospitalised to get off the drug.

Drug after drug followed, with drugs for side effects and drugs for the side effects of the drugs for the side effects. I became more and more sensitive until I was housebound and couldn't get out of bed. I was off all psychiatric drugs for around 3 years but physically very very sick.

Eventually I was given effexor (venlafaxine), try this they said, it's new. This time it was AMAZING, I was flying, literally manic, spent tens of £1000s online shopping while still being housebound. That did not last long before tachyphylaxis set in. After 22 years of swallowing everything that was given I did some research and was horrified by what I discovered. I then started to taper according to my doctors instructions, and failed dramatically. I was told I needed the drug for life and to forget about getting off, it is not possible.

More research and I did it myself, tapered off ALL the drugs that were slowly killing me. 6 years later I can not take ANY drugs, they make me very ill, even a paracetamol is out of the question. I am disabled, crippled with arthritis and fibromyalgia.

I never went back to work, and now too old. All those years lost, when a week off with TLC and talking out my stresses would have been enough. Please please end this nightmare, I am not the only one and people are just starting out on their drug nightmare, it makes me so sad to see them disappearing down the same pit i fell into all those years ago.