

PE1651/IIII

Teresa Lantz submission of 23 January 2018

I'm a 48 year old female from Texas in the USA. In my early thirties, I went to the doctor wanting help because I thought something was wrong with me because I becoming angry easily. I didn't want my children to have to deal with this. I had heard that it could be a chemical imbalance. I talked to the Dr. about 30 min and I was given 10 mg of Paxil. I was never warned of bad side effects or anything. He just said it was the safest and best one to try. I never felt good after that but had no idea it could be the meds. I just thought something was wrong. I went to the dr wanting a change because I so sleepy all the time. I was put on 10 mg of lexapro. I felt so bad all the time. Really fatigued and bad. I still had no idea it could be the meds. I would go to the dr for tests and tests would turn out fine. The longer I was on it the worst I felt. I had changed drs over the years and they just kept filling the prescription. I went back to the dr because I was feeling really bad and she decided that I had anxiety and upped the escitalopram to 20 mg. I didn't realize why I became so sick and went to the ER. They couldn't figure out what was wrong. That was 2013. I was so sick for 2 1/2 weeks and then got gradually better. After that I began to gain lots of weight and felt even worse with the fatigue and had bad headaches. It was so hard to do daily activities and I had to push myself to do anything. I thought something was really wrong with me. I didn't know what anxiety was because I had never dealt with it. I mind would race and I couldn't sit for very long at a time. I felt like a different person and was pushing everyone away. I would get so upset at the least thing. I didn't understand about the meds. I thought maybe I was starting to go through the change at age 46 and thought maybe the meds were making it worse. I made a bad decision and cut down my meds from 20mg. To 10mg. I started feeling a little better so about a week later I cut down to 5. I thought that was so little that about a week later I just stopped taking it. I was never told it was dangerous to do that. About a week or so later, I woke up and felt like I've never felt before. Like something had pulled the life out of me. From that time on, I felt like something was in the top of my stomach and I couldn't be calm. I couldn't sit or stand or lay down. It was pure torture. I went to the dr and they did tests and could find nothing wrong. I told my dr that I had come off the meds and she asked how I did it and said that it couldn't be that. I continually got worse. I lost my appetite and had my husband had to treat me like a child and make me eat 3 times a day. I saw a gastro dr and he found I had H-pylori. I took all the meds for that but continued to get worse. I would go to the ER hoping someone would figure out what was wrong. They would say it was anxiety and give me diazepam. It would make me worse. I tried to reinstate my lexapro 20 mg because i didn't understand what it would do and it made me worse. I would try to sleep and would wake up with panic attacks. I didn't realize what a panic attack was until then. I was so bad that I felt like I was crazy. I had depersonalization and derealisation(I had no idea what this was until I researched it later) It was like I was in a nonstop panic state. Everything felt like it hurt my mind. Light and noise and trying to think. I couldn't relax or sit, my mind and body wouldn't stop. I got so bad I went to see my moms dr. He thought I was in a manic state so he told me to go to the er and see the psychiatrist on duty. The psychiatrist told me I had serotonin toxicity and since I was scared of meds, he finally convinced me to take ciproheptadine. It actually helped calm my legs. I don't think that was what was wrong but the anahistimine helped calm my legs. The state I was in was so horrific that I felt I was in Hell. This horrific state lasted about 6 or 7 long, hard months. I had

no knowledge of mental illness until this happened. My brother-in-law told my sister it could be from getting off the meds too fast so she looked it up and I had all the symptoms. I never went back to the dr for fear they would try to put me back on meds. Nearly 2 years later, I am still left with so much to deal with. The panic attacks have stopped and all the fatigue and headaches and pains in my abdomen while I was on the meds have stopped. I still have bad anxiety and my mind is still struggling to think like it did. I want my life back. God and time will heal me but it is unnecessary suffering. I wish that the drs would have warned me about side effects and how to safely come off this medicine. I don't think it should be so easy for the drs to just prescribe these kinds of meds to anyone for any reason. They are dangerous poisons and change your mind and body.