

## **PE1651/JJJJJJ**

Anonymous submission of 15 February 2018

I watched the public petitions committee on 18th January around prescribed drug dependence and withdrawal. I was absolutely staggered by the level of ignorance displayed by the Scottish Minister for Mental Health Maureen Watt and Dr John Mitchell. Perhaps they would like to go through what I and many like me have been through and then tell us how they feel?

Over the past 12 years I have been existing in an Orwellian/Kafkaesque nightmare of psychiatric drugs, psychiatrists and hospitals.

It started when I was put on the antidepressant Cipralex in 2005 after a prolonged period of stress which culminated in me being in London on the day of the 7/7 terrorist attacks.

Despite only taking a couple of tablets I developed what I now know is a condition called akathisia - an intense state of agitation. I stopped taking the tablets immediately but after a month of severe anxiety, being unable to eat or sleep I was admitted to a private psychiatric hospital where they prescribed me the antipsychotic olanzapine off label (ie not approved for that use)

Two days later I was suicidal. I had never, ever been suicidal before

Over the next 10 years I tried numerous times to kill myself - overdoses, attempted drowning, strangulation, trying to throw myself under a train, you name it.

Over the next 10 years I saw 9 further psychiatrists and in total I was put on 15 different drugs. They told me I had severe depressive disorder. I was anxious, depressed, emotionally blunted, agoraphobic as well as suicidal.

Not one of these so called "medical experts" recognised that I was having a catastrophic reaction to the drugs. They just kept chopping and changing the drugs, upping and lowering the doses, starting and stopping at the drop of a hat. I was even offered electroconvulsive therapy which I declined. I didn't fancy having my brain fried.

18 months ago I came off olanzapine because my face started squirming uncontrollably - it's called tardive dyskinesia and is an effect of antipsychotic use.

I can't remember how I got off it but I do remember being wide awake 24/7 for about a month and suffering intense anxiety.

One day I suddenly felt a whole lot better - no longer anxious, depressed, emotionally blunted, agoraphobic or suicidal.

It was then that I discovered *The Pill that steals lives* by Katinka Blackford Newman and it all started to make sense. I also discovered thousands of people on social media having similar harrowing stories to tell. In addition many other books by the likes of Peter Breggin, Joanna Moncrieff, David Healy, Irving Kirsch, and James

Davies, all of which I have read with increasing alarm at what these drugs are doing to people.

During 2017 I spent 10 months withdrawing from the final 2 drugs venlafaxine and mirtazapine. This combination has a nickname - "California Rocket Fuel" You can imagine what that was doing to my poor nervous system.

At times I felt so ill I thought I was going to die. Sometimes I have had to spend days on end in bed. Early last year my blood pressure was sky rocketing and I had to call the paramedics out twice.

I finished my last dose just before Christmas. Since then I have been suffering from severe insomnia, skin rashes, gastrointestinal problems and burning/aching sensations over the whole of my body. I have no idea when and if this will ever go away.

I have also been trying to lose some of the 4 stone in weight that I put on due to these drugs.

I am quite likely to end up with type 1 insulin dependent diabetes after 10 years on olanzapine - it is one of the major effects of this drug.

I have lost my home, my kids, my relationships, my physical health and I am completely traumatised. At one point a year ago I was virtually destitute - homeless, broke, ill and terrified. I had even been on the receiving end of mental abuse by my own family who just do not seem to understand.

I nearly got sectioned when a psychiatrist turned up where I was staying with 2 henchmen and threatened to put me in hospital, back on olanzapine. I was absolutely terrified. I can begin to understand what it must have been like for Jewish people in Nazi Germany.

Once you are in the mental health system it is very hard to get out of it. I have managed it, but even then they have damned me further by giving me another totally subjective label of schizo affective disorder. They have tried to put me on a further antipsychotic, quetiapine which I have refused to take.

So what have these wonderful drugs done for me? Basically they have totally and utterly destroyed my life.

Am I angry? No, I am absolutely incandescent with rage.

If you look at the statistics produced by The Samaritans you will find that despite skyrocketing rates of antidepressant prescribing, suicide rates across the UK have changed little over the past 30 years.

An article on the website antidepaware recently quoted NHS statistics from a Dundee Evening Telegraph article which reported that between 2009 and 2015 147 people took their own lives in Dundee. In 2016 numbers reached 37 - the highest annual figure for 21 years

More than 87% of these people were apparently taking antidepressant medication.

Rather makes a mockery of the idea that these drugs save lives doesn't it?