

PE1651/KKKKKKK

Anonymous submission of 18 February 2018

Firstly, I would like to give the reason for my wish to remain anonymous. I have been under psychiatric care for the last 10 years during which time I have experienced seven hospital admissions. If I include all psychiatrists whose care I have been under in both the community and whilst in hospital there have been 17 in total. My time under their care and treatment has ranged from one appointment to just over a year. During this period there have been a number of occasions when the relationship between myself and some psychiatrists and also mental health nursing staff has been 'strained'. This has led to uncomfortable situations in which I believe I have been unfairly treated, sometimes humiliated and judged and shown little respect. I feel therefore that should I disclose my name I cannot feel sure that it would not prompt some kind of retaliatory action.

I have been prescribed numerous combinations of medication over the last 10 years by a number of the 17 psychiatrists. Never at any time were the subjects of side effects or withdrawal symptoms discussed or even mentioned by any of the 17 psychiatrists. As I experience many psychological and physical symptoms, which can often be debilitating, there has been continual denial that any of the numerous symptoms I currently experience or have done in the past are linked to the medication and are a consequence of my mental ill health and/or my more recent physical health problems.

Rather than go back to the beginning of my mental health crisis period around 2007/8 I will move forward to 2012. Up until 2012 I was prescribed various medications which had little or no effect in terms of my mental health. By this time I had developed numerous additional symptoms including extremely poor sleep on a nightly basis, many different types of pain and aches throughout my body, panic attacks, night sweats plus a number of other symptoms. I had also developed problems with my gait resulting in me falling on several occasions in the street. This began shortly after being prescribed a mood stabiliser. As the weeks progressed, this difficulty with walking continued while my mental health remained very poor. I was eventually admitted to hospital yet again. At my patient meeting with the psychiatrist and ward staff team I raised my concerns regarding the mood stabiliser. I was assured that this was in no way causing or contributing to my walking difficulties. I voiced my disagreement as I was sure that the mood stabiliser was responsible. I was discharged following a 2 month admission and decided to stop the mood stabiliser as soon as I returned home. After a month or so my gait returned to normal - **I had no problems walking and no further falls.**

As my health continued to remain extremely poor and not responding to any medication, ECT, Psychological Therapy or the various alternative and complementary therapies I tried, I appealed to the various professionals involved that they consider a re-think regarding my treatment, especially the liberal prescribing of medication. Over the next 3 years various medications were prescribed but yet again I failed to respond positively, resulting in further hospital admissions.

In March and April of 2015 I wrote to both my GP and my then Psychiatrist expressing my concerns in detail over the care and treatment to date. By now my mental and physical health and level of despair had become very serious. As far as I was concerned it was my view that many of my symptoms may well have been caused or

were made worse as a consequence of my prescribed medications or at the very least contributing to my overall ill health. Throughout the period from 2008 to 2015 suicide was never far from my mind - in fact it was an extremely unwelcome and terrifying constant companion. I was in total despair and did succumb to the warped attraction of finding peace with two attempts on my life. In June of that year I wrote to my psychiatrist who I think was number 13 or 14 detailing my deep concerns over my treatment throughout the previous 6/7 years to date.

Continual crises continued throughout 2015 at the end of which I was admitted to hospital once again. I was discharged several weeks later still extremely unwell - my levels of emotional distress and physical pain were unbearable. By this time my concerns and disagreements with psychiatrists over their diagnoses and treatment prescribed both in the community and in hospital were adding further concerns making my situation worse. I was so ill that my behaviour and presentation was often in a distressed state and as a result I feel I was readily judged as a 'problem' and treated with disdain by some individuals responsible for my care and treatment. My wish to remain anonymous for fear of retribution is very real - which is a very sad state of affairs.

After my admission in 2015 I was discharged late November - my physical and psychological health remaining chronic. By this time I was being prescribed Pregabalin (Lyrica). As I recall, the reason was to see if it helped ease the various physical pains I continued to experience. My understanding is that it is for neuropathic pain. The physical pain was absolutely horrendous. **In January 2016 I suffered a stroke.** On admission to the general hospital I was asked to list any medication I was on and also seen by the resident psychiatrist (who treated me very well and with respect - unlike so many others). The morning following admission I wasn't given Pregabalin. When I asked why, I was told that *"it was out of stock"*. This seemed a strange response to me but I was in no fit state to question any further. The (kind) psychiatrist then prescribed some other medication the name of which I can't recall. On discharge I was sent to the brain Injury Unit to begin my stroke recovery programme. And yes, once again, seen by another psychiatrist and prescribed Venlafaxine, Quetiapine and Diazepam. It was around this time that I began to question why I was taken off Pregabalin overnight without tapering and then offered what I now know was a ridiculous excuse that "it was out of stock". I have since discovered reports with information describing Pregabalin as a **'death sentence'**, that **'it causes brain decline faster than any substance known to mankind'** and it **'increased risk of heart attack and stroke'**. Somehow **the out of stock** reason became not only ridiculous but highly suspicious. I spent around 3 months in stroke recovery. Both my mental and physical health now further complicated because of the consequences of the stroke were indescribable. After discharge from the stroke recovery unit in April 2016 guess what - I was introduced to psychiatrist number 15.

By September 2016 another crisis resulted in another admission and I now met psychiatrist number 16. By this time my case notes had expanded so much that they rivalled War And Peace in length. According to my current CPN (who has also showed a level of decency and respect that others sadly lacked), I am considered 'a complex case'. Again I encountered difficulties with some nursing staff and constantly felt I was being judged and unwilling to 'help myself' which I have always disputed. On one occasion while in hospital I was suddenly gripped with extreme cutting chest pains. I became extremely distressed which eventually prompted the nurses to check my blood

pressure etc. Their conclusion was that it was another symptom of extreme anxiety. Having expressed my level of distress through highly audible 'screams' their view that it was 'just anxiety' left me feeling rather humiliated. Another episode of the same acute cutting chest pains occurred about a week later. Because of their initial response the first time I could not bring myself to inform the nurses. I did everything I could to withstand the pain in silence. It lasted around 20 minutes. Two or three days later psychiatrist 16 came to my room to have a discussion. During the course of this discussion I mentioned the acute cutting pains I experienced again a few days before. He looked somewhat alarmed and decided he should give me an ECG. Within an hour I was admitted to the general hospital where it was confirmed that I had **suffered a heart attack**.

After a short stay in the cardiac ward I returned to the psychiatric hospital. I felt it was now impossible for me to remain in hospital receiving treatment that I had absolutely no faith in - especially the medication. I remained in a very dark and desperate place but had to somehow return home. I suspect my decision to be discharged was greeted in silent satisfaction. Early December 2016 I was discharged and so began the latest chapter in my ongoing struggle with severe mental and physical health difficulties. The 2016 Christmas / New Year period is best remembered as the time that I went a full 2 weeks without any sleep whatsoever. I was now under the care of my 17th and current psychiatrist who has turned out to be someone who I trust and respect irrespective of her allegiance to the psychiatric dogma of 'chemical imbalance.' I provided her with an updated report of my grievances for her records. My huge dislike and mistrust of mental health medication and much of the psychiatry regime in general remains. I have discovered on several occasions that I have been unable so far to come off or even reduce my current medication without experiencing what appears to be awful withdrawal symptoms. I am currently between a rock and a hard place. Each day is a monumental struggle for me mentally, emotionally and physically with so many debilitating symptoms. I remain convinced that the chemical diet of the last 10 years has contributed to my continuing ill health in such a way that addiction is now an additional problem.

Many of my symptoms including joint, muscle, abdomen, stomach aches and pains, nausea, headaches, anxiety, distress and more lately chronic fatigue and weakness remain my unwelcome daily companions. It became necessary for me to eventually give up work in 2008. The experience of any kind of satisfying and fulfilling day is now a distant memory. I'd also like to say that I don't enter the debate on the consequences of prescribing mental health medication with gay abandon as a complete novice. On giving up work in 2008 I had spent the previous 11 years working in mental health as an Advocacy Project Co-ordinator which required me to not only work closely with service users but also mental health professionals including psychiatrists.

Finally I would like to complete this submission with the image and words of Arlin Zee below :



TORMENT

**Deep is the ocean with swells of emotion
Raging torrents sweep all in their path
Dense black clouds hang like shrouds
And suffocate lives in their wrath**

**Cruel is the fire as flames reach higher
In piercing pain our spirit cries
Silence screams, while our soul, it seems
Is cast to the wind and dies**

arlin zee