

## **PE1651/UUUUUU**

Anonymous submission of 14 February 2018

In 2009 I went to see a GP because I was suffering from anxiety. I was in the process of making some big decisions and I just wanted something to make me feel a bit calmer. The GP prescribed me the SSRI drug – Citalopram. The plan was I would be on the drug for about six months.

About six months later I tapered off the drug over a period of about 1-2 months. A few weeks after being off the drug, I completely crashed, suffering the worst anxiety and depression I have ever experienced. I was put back on the drug. Over the course of the next couple of years I tried on another two occasions to come off the drug. A similar thing happened each time. I was given absolutely no guidance by the GP in terms of just how hard these drugs are to come off. And she told me that I probably needed to be on them for life. She never once indicated that maybe I had come off the drug too quickly.

During my time on the drug I suffered the side effect of sexual dysfunction. The drug also numbed my emotions to the point that I could not experience any romantic feelings. It was not until I entered a relationship that I truly realised the effects of these drugs. The relationship did not last long. It was at this point that I made the promise to myself to get off the drug one way or another.

Through doing my own research I found out that I needed to spend at least a year gradually reducing the dose.

I am now off the drug and have been for 13 months. I feel fine in terms of no anxiety. But I have been left with PSSD (post ssri sexual dysfunction) i.e. my sexual function has not returned to a pre-ssri state. Basically I may as well still be taking the drug; the situation is that bad. And I have read about hundreds of cases online of people suffering the same condition, as well as other horrific withdrawal symptoms.

I would do anything to turn the clock back and undo going to see the GP and starting Citalopram. It is by far, the most damaging thing I have ever put into my body. How these drugs are allowed to be consumed by humans is beyond me. If a supermarket chain was found to be selling a food item with something in it that did this to people, they would be sued for millions.

I have lost so much because of taking this drug. And I want justice. So many lives have been ruined because of these medications. That is not to say that they should be banned, but like limb amputations, they should only be used as an absolute last resort.

I will never trust a GP, or any doctor for that matter, again in my life.

And as for the companies that produce these drugs; for sure they know what these medications can do to people. They are well aware of the thousands of stories online of people who have suffered so severely. The people responsible need to be brought to justice - one way or another.