

**PE1651/VVVVVV**

Anna Wolfe submission of 16 April 2018

I am writing in support of the Petition regarding Prescription Drug Dependence. I live in the USA, but I am hopeful that if the Scottish government can take effective action on this worldwide public health crisis, then perhaps other governments will follow suit.

While I was raising my small son by myself after his father succumbed to an addiction to drugs, my own father died, my best friend died, and I lost a job. I had to go back on public benefits, and shortly after this, after an unwanted abortion, I was not ready to participate in the local welfare to work program. So I talked to my welfare worker about my depression. I was put on Prozac (fluoxetine), and at first it was helpful. However, no plan was ever made to cease this medication, and eventually I began to feel worse and worse, physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. I continued to talk to my doctors, but no mention of any problems pertaining to withdrawal from Prozac (fluoxetine) was ever made. Other medications were tried and eventually, when my mother died and I entered menopause, I endured pure Hell on Earth in the form of all the symptoms that you now have in your database, before I finally made use of the Internet to learn that most of my problems were most likely caused by using my medications exactly as prescribed. I weaned myself off of all medications all by myself over a period of 3 years, receiving far more help & support from strangers I met online than from any medical or social service personnel. I have been off all medications for two years now, and I am delighted that I am now able to return to work, at the age of 60, after a 7 year period where I was unable to work and had to rely on SSI Disability payments.

It is unconscionable that there are hundreds of thousands of people in similar situations and that we continue to be marginalized and blamed for our own problems as though we are somehow defective people and must not be taking our medications as prescribed.

This is a public health crisis as well as an economic crisis. I cannot imagine that governments would prefer to spend more money on Disability Insurance programs than on adequate social services. Please read Anatomy of an Epidemic by Robert Whitaker in regards to the Disability statistics, and read Lost Connections by Johann Hari in regards to the many lower cost and more successful social programs that have been tried.

Thank you so much for your attention.