

**PE1651/ZZZZZ**

Anonymous submission of 12 February 2018

I am writing of my experience of the use of anti-depressants and the health service in Scotland in a bid to prevent what happened to me happening to other people.

I am a 69 year old retired teacher. I retired in 2008 and throughout my life I have never had any mental health problems.

For the first 4 years of my retirement I had a wonderful life and was perfectly content but around August 2012 I developed an extremely dry mouth and I felt generally unwell. I thought there was something physically wrong with me and I went to my GP for a health check.

I was told they did not do a health check but they would do a blood check. I was told I could have Sjogren's Syndrome, an incurable condition and my dry mouth became much worse with sores. There was also some problem with my iron level but this proved to be groundless.

I was then told I was depressed and anxious and I was given Agomelatine. On this medication, just after taking it, I had a severe terrifying panic attack. On going back to the GP I was then given a variety of medications, Propranolol, Prozac etc.

At this point I would like to digress and explain what I have now worked out what my problem was and how it should have been managed.

I WAS suffering from extreme anxiety because I was worried about a family member. My physical symptoms were caused by anxiety but as I had never suffered from this before I did not realise this. Medication was not the answer to my problem but once I ended up on these medications they affected me so badly I could not make rational decisions.

I think just giving patients medication after medication is totally wrong and that it causes great distress.

Eventually in December 2012 I was in such a state, unable to sleep and extremely anxious, that I went privately to see a Psychiatrist who diagnosed Depression and prescribed Mirtazapine. This was a complete disaster as this drug made my symptoms even worse but he persuaded me to continue taking it, saying that it might take time. After 5 weeks of hell, in February 2013 I had to stop taking it and the end result was I had a breakdown and ended up in hospital for weeks.

Once again I would like to EMPHASISE, I was never depressed, only anxious for a very understandable reason but these drugs affected me so badly I was totally incapable of functioning.

In hospital I was given a variety of medications and eventually came out taking Sertraline, Lorazepam etc etc. This was March 2013 and I managed to function but I lost 2 stone in weight, going from 9 stone to 7 stone !!

I was also worried about being fit to attend my younger son's wedding in September 2013 but I did manage this.

Between October 2013 - May 2016 I continued to take medication and attend the Psychiatrist at my Health Centre. I was just coping but trying to cut down medication.

The next disaster happened in June 2016 when a new psychiatrist assured me she knew the very drug which would help me, Olanzaprine, Even thinking about this makes me angry. She prescribed this drug for me and I had a complete breakdown and ended up in hospital for weeks. I have since read that Olanzaprine is an antipsychotic but it causes psychotic symptoms in those who are not psychotic. I came out of hospital on Sertraline, Diazepam, Lithium etc etc in August 2016.

Over the next few months I gradually reduced the medication, still attending the psychiatrist. In January 2017 I started to reduce my medication gradually and in May 2017 I stopped all medication.

I would like to state that my memory has been affected by these medications but that this is the basic story.

Why am I writing this ?

1. I would like to think it might prevent what happened to me happening to someone else. Not only did I not need these medications they actually caused me and my husband years of misery.

2. My husband tells me I was suicidal on at least 2 occasions on these drugs. I have no memory of this and I have never had any notion of suicide. Every time I read of someone on antidepressants committing suicide I think of this.

3. I do not think GPs should prescribe antidepressants.

4. While taking Pregabalin my husband reported that I was having blank spots and he was ignored until I actually had a blank spot in the Psychiatrist's office after which I was swiftly taken off this medication.

5. I feel there should be some marker or flag in a person's medical records if they suffer reactions to these drugs.

6. My treatment must have cost the NHS a fortune and yet I have worked out for myself most of it was unnecessary. I feel I was too trusting of the medical profession.

7. Here is a list of the different drugs I was prescribed in no particular order.

1. Agomelatine
2. Citralopram
3. Diazepam
4. Loranzepam
5. Prozac
6. Propranolol
7. Lithium
8. Pregabalin
9. Buspirone
10. Olanzaprine
11. Mirtazapine
12. Sertraline
13. Quetiapine
14. Zopicone

Many of these drugs I could not tolerate so what a waste of money!!

8. I am particularly angry and upset at being given Olanzaprine in 2016. I feel the consultant who gave me this drug was negligent and did not look at my history of bad reactions to these drugs.

9. I was fortunate that my husband supported me and looked after me through all this. He has suffered greatly also trying to help me and no one asked how he was managing !!!

10. Since stopping all drugs I have put on weight going from 6st 12lb at the lowest to 8st 7lb which is my normal weight. However, since reaching this weight in September 2017, I have been suffering from IBS symptoms and I now read that interfering with serotonin levels can affect the gut !!

I hope my comments are given serious consideration and that they might help to stop someone going through the trauma my husband and myself have suffered for 5 years.

I would like to emphasise that I am taking no medication and I did not need medication in the first place. My mistake was trusting that the medical profession knew what they were doing however the list of medications I was given tells a different story. Unfortunately I was not capable of rational thought on these

medications and even when I decided to stop them I was not really encouraged to do so.