

PE1651/LL

Christine Cooper submission of 7 January 2018

I have had first hand experience of psychiatric drug withdrawal symptoms. Namely ssri's.

My story begins in 2010. I suffered a stomach bleed. This was due to the combination of an NSAID that I was prescribed at that time for pain, and an SSRI, fluoxetine (Prozac), that I had been prescribed a few years earlier for anxiety. The bleed was an adverse effect that was possible with these types of drugs in combination. I was not made aware of this possibility until many years later.

I had had advice from my gp that stopping the ssri in particular in this way would pose no adverse effects.

I began to experience debilitating symptoms, that gradually increased in numbers, and in severity. These are the majority of symptoms experienced by myself over a total of 7 years, to date. Many of the intolerable symptoms lasted many years. Some are still problematic today.

Extreme Sickness

Extreme Dizziness

Extreme flu like symptoms

Sensitivity to light and sound

Chills

Inability to hold head up

Crying spells

Severe head and ear pain/pressure

Neck pain, face pain, all over body pain

Lymph gland pain and swelling, in neck, underarms, groin, legs and ankles

Extreme sinus pain

Inability to open jaw

Inability to have facial expressions

Inability to focus on anything

Hearing loss/sensory hearing loss, Derealization, Depersonalization, Desensitization,

Dissociative symptoms, Decreased sense of touch, taste, smell,

B12 deficiency

Vitamin D deficiency

Altered pain perceptions

Reduced salivation

Inability to feel hunger/thirst

Bleeding gums, tongue

Tooth pain

Numbness in arms, hands, legs and feet

Akathisia

Extreme fatigue

Feeling of being drunk

Inability to form words

Inability to read

Inability to think

Profound memory loss in all areas (neuro psychological testing)
Severe concentration problems
Insomnia
Mania
Psychosis
Suicidal thoughts/compulsions
Hair loss, body wide
Inability to sweat
Enlarged pupils
Misshapen pupil
Muscle loss
Seborrheic dermatitis
Painful legs, feet
Tendon pain in feet
Painful wrists
Extreme bone pain
Incontinence
Bowel changes/incontinence
Absent reactions
Slowed thinking
Inability to feel temperature of water, hot/cold, Complete body numbness
Inability to feel body
Entirely absent emotions
PSSD.

I have had no help from the medical establishment in my recovery thus far. Internet forums were my lifeline.

With the severity of the symptoms I instinctively knew that what I was experiencing was akin to brain damage. I was not aware that there were withdrawal problems with these drugs.

I communicated to my gp and many others that I believed the drug had caused these issues.

I was met with blank stares from the medical profession.

It is very difficult to organise any sort of recovery plan when you are cognitively impaired. It is impossible when you are abandoned.

People, suffering withdrawal problems, protracted withdrawal problems, tolerance withdrawal problems, CT withdrawal problems, ALL deserve the care and compassion and expertise that any other section of the health community deserves. They need to be acknowledged and provided for, provided a helpline, the possibility of an advocate, and accurate, safe withdrawal/tapering advice, instruction and help, with several therapeutic agencies, with support services involved.

This is essential.

People are dying.