

PE1651/U

Rebekah Hock submission of 7 January 2018

I was prescribed venlafaxine by the doctor I was assigned at the Mother and Baby unit for perinatal mental health.

I was diagnosed with PND and anxiety at three months postpartum. I was referred by my GP to the specialist unit.

I was prescribed venlafaxine because the citalopram I was originally put on didn't seem to be working. I don't remember the doctors telling me anything significant about coming off venlafaxine. They may have mentioned that I would need to taper off it gradually but nothing more.

I was not really in a fit state to question the medication I was being given. I trusted the doctors knew what I needed at that point and I do believe it helped me out of a very bad place.

For me I feel let down by the care I have received once I started to taper off the medication. If I'd known how long and difficult it would be I would have started the taper a lot sooner. I would have appreciated more support and understanding from the doctors that originally prescribed it.

I understand I am defiantly one of the luckier ones as my GP has been sympathetic and prescribed me the venlafaxine liquid in order to taper very slowly after I had two failed attempts at cutting down the tablets.

I think there must be better support and ways to help patients that want to get off this medication. Instead of just being told that their original health problems must be returning and therefore increasing the dosage, which I have personal experience of.

For me the process of tapering at only 10% has been very similar to the original breakdown I experienced, with lots of similar withdrawal side effects.

Extreme anxiety
Depressive thoughts
Uncontrollable crying
Complete exhaustion
Lack of energy and motivation
Anger
Headaches
Stomach problems

In total it is looking to take me 18-24 months to taper off venlafaxine.