

PE1651/BBBBB

Mary David submission of 23 January 2018

Year : 2000
Diagnosis : Bi-polar Disorder
Clinical Depression
Reason for diagnosis : Poor mood, sadness, crying, low esteem, anxiety,
attempted suicide, obsessiveness
Prescribed Medication : Carbamazepine - 200mg (daily)
Clonazepam - 0.25mg (daily)
Fluoxetine - 20mg (daily)
Possible benefit : Less anxiety
More positive outlook on life
Experienced side effects : Lack of empathy
Muted emotions
Feeling distant
No interest in intimacy

Year : 2004
Stopped Medication : Carbamazepine - 200mg
Reason : Psychiatrist advised to stop immediately due to pregnancy
Withdrawal : Extreme behaviour change
Extreme mood swings
Out of character behaviour
Almost lost my job due to the withdrawal symptoms

Year : 2007/2008
Tapered off Medication : Fluoxetine 20mg
Clonazepam 0.25mg
Type of Taper : Quick taper over 6 weeks
Withdrawal : Crying at least 2-9 hours per day
: Extreme fear & anxiety
: Extreme low mood
: Extreme sadness
: Childlike behaviour
: Unable to cope with day to day living
: Felt dead inside
: Felt it was better to die than live
: Unable to look after child
: Resigned from work, could not cope

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Therapy	:	Daily hospital visits in psychiatric day unit for activities
Reinstated medication	:	6 months after tapering
Medication	:	Fluoxetine 20mg
	:	Clonazepam 0.25mg
Recovery	:	7 months after reinstating was able to function normally again
Year	:	2009
Medication change	:	Consultant changed medication from Fluoxetine 20mg to Citalopram 20mg
Withdrawal	:	Out of character behaviour Extreme mood swings It felt like i could not deal with everyday life Unable to manage emotions
Recovery	:	8 months
Prescribed	:	Citalopram 20mg Clonazepam 0.25mg
Year	:	2014
Tapered off medication	:	Clonazepam 0.25mg
Type of taper	:	Quick taper over 2 weeks
Withdrawal	:	Extreme solemn mood Blank Out of character behaviour
Recovery	:	6 months
Year	:	July 2015
Tapered off medication	:	Citalopram 20mg
Type of taper	:	Quick taper over 3 weeks
Withdrawal	:	Noticeable withdrawal symptoms began about 6 months after taper Extreme low self esteem Terrible angry outbursts Severe reactions to daily life Tormenting irrational/obsessive thoughts Debilitating fear & anxiety Internalised panic attacks Crying for up to 5 hours a day for over a year Afraid to go outside Severe mood swings Extreme obsessiveness over daily life

Dark negative constant thoughts
 Unreasonable thoughts
 Reliving past experiences & believing
 they were actually happening now
 PTSD
 Brain fog
 Sleepless nights with tormenting thoughts
 Restlessness
 Flight or fight responses in total chaos
 Imagining things to have happened that did
 not happen
 Relentless negative thoughts
 Quit volunteering work
 Therapy : Came across 'surviving antidepressants' group
 in my despair for help
 Counselling via GP
 Attended a 'mind' course
 Spent so much money on trying different
 vitamin supplements and natural remedies
 Recovery : 70% improved since stopping the medication
 2.5years ago

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my summarised journey. Hopefully, like cancer, mental health research, will be continuous. We would love for the medical profession to hear us and believe us when we say that we are no longer depressed or anxious; that when we stop the medication, taper or cut down we face the onslaught of withdrawal, just like any other mind altering drug or vice. We would love more honesty and transparency in the mental health profession and pharmaceutical industry.

The surviving antidepressants group has been an oasis for me.

We would love for practitioners, scientists and pharmaceuticals to re-engage and tackle what so many of us have been saying; we are going through hell when we stop the medications.

From my experience, I feel, that when we cannot cope with life due to grief, stress, childhood or adult traumas, in most cases, a pill should not be the answer, especially when you may end up with more problems than you started with.