

PE1651/GGGG

Wendy Beveridge submission of 12 January 2018

I would like to add my comment that I have been injured by taking Ativan as prescribed. I took it successfully for a number of years to treat an alpha/delta sleep disorder (part of Lyme disease), although I was never told not to "cold turkey" off of it. In fact I was praised by pharmacist for doing so (He stated "Some people never get off of that stuff.") I did that a number of times, going on or off of it as I felt I needed it for my sleep disorder. One night I did what I thought was tapering off of it (I now know the reduction I made that night should be considered a cold turkey...going from 4mg/night to 2). I have not slept deeply or properly since. Had I been advised that all my cold turkey or rapid tapers would ultimately harm me, I may have been spared the last 15 years of hell that I have been through. From that fateful night 15 years ago, my sleep disorder has been exponentially worse, devastating my health and life. In my acute stage which went on for years, I had akathisia, extraordinary sound sensitivity, extreme weakness, and an inner shakiness that made me feel like I was dying. I lost the ability to watch television (I can now watch it but only shows with simple plots), and the ability to drive (I have not yet regained that). The distress has been extreme and I don't wish this on anyone. I urge you to take measures to inform patients the horrible risks of taking these medications, and for those already on them, to provide proper information on how to taper following the Heather Ashton tapering protocol.