

PE1651/GGGGGG

Anonymous submission of 31 January 2018

I am 41 years old. I was prescribed antidepressants on and off for 15 years since the age of 23. I thought there were no issues with the medicines, but I was increasingly more tired and apathetic. Drs always said this was "residual" depression, but I never had those issues before the medicines, no matter how severely depressed I was. I was always anxious/agitated. Never tired and apathetic. These issues only got worse the longer I was on the medicines, and the more medicines I tried. Until I was disabled and could not shower or work or do anything.

At that point I started suspecting the medicines were aggravating the problem, but no dr was willing to even consider this possibility. They just wanted to try more medicine or increase the doses, which was only making the problem worse. When I finally started tapering the medication, there was some improvement, but it's extremely slow. It's taking me years to recover normal motivation and energy level. I struggle with these even when my mood is good.

Also, I am having extreme difficulty stopping the medication. I have tapered following dr's orders, but the withdrawal is unbearable. No matter how slow I taper, I get severe disabling symptoms that last months after a cut! I even tried bridging to another medicine under dr.'s supervision, but it didn't work (even though dr. assured me it would). I've been trying to stop the medication for 3 years, but I constantly have to hold the taper because withdrawal becomes unbearable.

Withdrawal symptoms include chronic headaches, dizziness, extreme drowsiness, worse fatigue, severe anxiety, trouble sleeping, intrusive thoughts, severe depression.

I have seen over 8 psychiatrists in 3 countries, and none ever warned me that the medicine could cause anhedonia and apathy. I have since read in the scientific research literature that it has been reported since the 1990s that this could be a side effect of the medication. I suffered this for years and it became disabling. Drs kept adding medication and compounding the problem. I have lost 15 years of my life to this.

Neither was I ever warned that withdrawal from antidepressants could be this severe or last this long (I was in severe withdrawal for 9 months after my last cut). Right now, no dr knows how to help me get off the medication without severe long lasting withdrawal. So now I'm getting damaged by med side effects, but unable to stop the medication without ending in a hospital from severe withdrawal. This has been going on for 3 years.

This needs to change. We trust drs to disclose the true risks of long term medication use. Instead, we are prescribed medications that drs don't even understand. If something goes wrong, drs are unable to recognize it is caused by the drug, or to remedy the issue. When we report the risks to drs, they don't believe us, and continue adding more drugs, even if we're getting worse. So we stop going to the dr and suffer for years on our own, not knowing where to get help.

Thank you for paying attention to this issue. In the last 3 years, I have met many others who had the exact same issues as me. There are thousands of us damaged by these meds.