

PE1651/SSSSS

Conrad Evans submission of 1 February 2018

I would like to submit a short account of my history with antidepressants and similar medications.

I was diagnosed with bi-polar disorder in 2005 and was put on various different ssri's over the years, most of which I can't remember the name of. I was also put on Depakote and an antipsychotic medication, and finally lithium.

I had various health problems over the years but my ailments were always brushed off by doctors as side effects from the medication I was taking.

In 2013 I suffered a devastating brain haemorrhage which has left me with life changing disabilities. I can now look back at the physical problems I had - not being able to see properly, not being able to drive or even read a book, and I can see they were signs of the aneurysm slowly bleeding into my brain, but doctors told me I was making a fuss over nothing.

I am still having treatment for the arteriovenous malformation in my brain which caused the haemorrhage. One of the complications of the bleed into my brain is right sided nerve pain, for which I was prescribed various pain killing medications. I was still on duloxetine at this time for my bi-polar disorder. Over the space of a year I was given different opioid medications in the form of pills and patches. These medications were often swapped on a weekly basis as nothing seemed to touch the pain. I was finally left on Lyrica and morphine.

The side effects from these medications were horrible and I wanted to get off them as soon as possible.

I came off morphine quite easily with few side effects, but when I stopped taking Lyrica and Duloxetine after a very fast taper my problems really began.

For the past year I have had terrible headaches, facial and eye pain, joint pains and sinus problems. My vision often narrows down to a very small field of vision which is a huge problem as I already have right-sided hemianopia, which means some days I am almost completely blind.

I haven't slept properly for the past year because of the terrible pains and scratching in my eyes and sinus. I have barely left the house as I am frightened to go anywhere as I can't see properly.

I have been admitted to hospital because of these withdrawals and have been examined by the eye doctor in the hospital but no-one can find anything wrong with me.

All the doctors I speak to refuse to believe my problems are down to withdrawals from the drugs I was on.

I really feared for my sanity until I found other people having the same problems when they came off their medications through various pages on Facebook.

These online groups have been a lifeline to me over the past few months. I can only hope that my withdrawal symptoms fade over the next year or so.

I wish someone had warned me back in 2005 how damaging these drugs can be, and how hard it is to stop taking them.