

UN Human Rights Council Condemns Forced Psychiatric Practices

CCHR urges need to ban coercive treatment and electroshock following the United Nations Human Rights Council condemnation of forced psychiatric treatment.

CLEARWATER, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, September 25, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The United Nations Human Rights Council has condemned forced psychiatric treatment, including [electroshock therapy](#) (ECT), and called for a repeal of laws that allow coercive practices in the mental health field. According to the Council's recent "Mental health and human rights" report, countries "should reframe and recognize these practices as constituting torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment..."[1] The report resulted from a consultation held in Geneva in May, attended by UN Special Rapporteurs, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), such as [Citizens Commission on Human Rights](#) (CCHR), and persons with mental health disabilities. CCHR, a mental health watchdog said it concurs with the Council's report that coercive treatment should be outlawed.



Ban Electroshock (ECT) Device Being Used on Children, the Elderly and Vulnerable Patients



CCHR says the report also reinforces the mental health watchdog's call for ECT to be prohibited. Jan Eastgate, international president of CCHR, said, "ECT was invented in fascist Italy in 1938 using 80 volts of electricity.[2] After the initial electric shock had seared through the first patient's

head, he screamed, 'Not another one! It's deadly.'"[3] Today, electroshock (electroconvulsive) treatment uses more than five times the voltage used in the 1940s and during the past 25 years, there have been an estimated 7,500 deaths linked to ECT in the U.S. alone.

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There needs to be a U.S. and worldwide ban on the use of ECT so that a humane mental health system can exist."

Jan Eastgate, international president of CCHR

The UN report also published that Special Rapporteur Catalina Devandas Aguilar agreed that "involuntary interventions, such as electroconvulsive therapies, psychosurgery, forced sterilization and other invasive, painful and irreversible treatments, continued to be

permitted, contrary to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.”

The Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Nils Melzer, also condemned as unlawful forced institutionalization that may amount to torture and ill-treatment.

Despite such damning findings — views held by experts since ECT’s inception — the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has never required the electroshock device manufacturers to conduct clinical trials proving safety of the devices, nor does the FDA regulate these ECT devices that are equated with torture. “A person can be administered ECT at the direction of psychiatrists who claim it is needed, even though they can’t explain how it supposedly works,” stated Diane Stein, president of the Florida chapter of CCHR. “Mental health laws in the

U.S. also allow ECT to be given involuntarily in certain circumstances and therefore, by internationally recognized standards, non-consenting individuals are being tortured throughout our country.”



CCHR says it’s not the first time the UN committee on torture has defined ECT in terms of torture. On Feb. 1, 2013, Juan E. Méndez, the then Special Rapporteur of the committee called upon states to “impose an absolute ban on all forced and non-consensual medical interventions against persons with disabilities, including the non-consensual administration of psychosurgery, electroshock and mind-altering drugs...”[4] He said that forced psychiatric interventions, when committed against persons with psychosocial disabilities, “satisfies both intent and purpose required under the article 1 of the Convention against Torture, notwithstanding claims of ‘good intentions’ by medical professionals...”

However, instead of ensuring brain-damaging electroshock is abolished, the FDA and American Psychiatric Association (APA) want ECT to be more broadly administered with reduced restrictions.

Wayne Ramsay, J.D., a volunteer attorney for the Law Project for Psychiatric Rights, wrote that ECT “damages the brain sufficiently to impair whatever thinking the ‘patient’ was engaging in.” In *Understanding the Brain*, a course consisting of 18 hours of recorded lectures by Jeanette Norden, Ph.D., professor of Cell & Developmental Biology at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and Professor of Neurosciences at Vanderbilt University College of Arts and Sciences, she said: “Each time a seizure occurs, neurons die.”[5]

Yet the APA recommends removing “brain damage” from the ECT consent form[6] and say the procedure is “safer” today.

Conversely, Mr. Ramsay stated: “ECT advocates deceive the public, patients, legislators, and judges by claiming ECT as administered today is different and less harmful than in the past.” An “autopsy study, EEGs, and observation of those who have received ECT indicate those given ECT

with anesthesia, a muscle paralyzing drug, and forced breathing of air or oxygen experience the same brain damage, memory loss, and intellectual impairment as those given ECT without these modifications," he warned.

In its remarks, the UN Human Rights Council report stated: "During the interactive dialogue, representatives of the Citizens Commission on Human Rights" was "one of many speakers that reiterated the call to shift from the biomedical model and deprivation of liberty in mental health care, to increased focus on the root causes" and "to promote a recovery approach."

CCHR urges signing the petition to ban ECT at Ban Electroshock (ECT) Device Being Used on Children, the Elderly and Vulnerable Patients

About CCHR: Initially established by the Church of Scientology and renowned psychiatrist Dr. Thomas Szasz in 1969, CCHR's mission is to eradicate abuses committed under the guise of mental health and enact patient and consumer protections. L. Ron Hubbard, founder of Scientology, first brought psychiatric imprisonment to wide public notice: "Thousands and thousands are seized without process of law, every week, over the 'free world' tortured, castrated, killed. All in the name of 'mental health,'" he wrote in March 1969. For more information please visit www.cchrflorida.org

References:

[1] "Mental Health and Human Rights," United Nations Human Rights Council, 39th session; 10–28 Sept. 2018, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/MentalHealth/A_HRC_39_36_EN.pdf.

[2] "75 Years of Electroconvulsive Therapy," ECT Statistics, 20 May 2013, <https://ectstatistics.wordpress.com/2013/05/20/75-years-of-electroconvulsive-therapy/>.

[3] John Breeding, Ph.D., "Electroshock: On How and Why It Lingers on Long After Insulin Coma Shock and Lobotomy Are Gone," Ethical Human Psychology and Psychiatry, Volume 18, Number 1, 2016, <http://endofshock.com/EHPPElectroshockLingersOn.pdf?>

[4] A/HRC/22/53, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Juan E. Méndez," United Nations, General Assembly, Human Rights Council, Twenty-second Session, Agenda Item 3, 1 Feb. 2013, p. 21, para 85, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session22/A.HRC.22.53.English.pdf>.

[5] Wayne Ramsay, J.D., "Psychiatry's Electroconvulsive Therapy: A Crime Against Humanity," copyrighted 2018, <http://www.wayneramsay.com/ect.htm>.

[6] The Practice of Electroconvulsive Therapy: Recommendations for Treatment, Training, and Privileging — A Task Force Report of the American Psychiatric Association 1990. Richard Weiner, Max Fink, et al.

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