

# FDA Allows Brain-Damaging Electroshock for Teens: CCHR Says Decision is Illogical, Deceptive and Dangerous

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CLEARWATER, FL, UNITED STATES, February 12, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) recent Final Order on [Electroshock Treatment](#) (ECT) devices—reducing their high-risk classification—will enable unbridled use of a device never proven safe and effective. Jan Eastgate, president of the international mental health watchdog, [Citizens Commission on Human Rights](#) (CCHR), called the decision illogical, deceptive and dangerous. ECT sends up to 460 volts of electricity through the brain, inducing a grand mal seizure that can cause brain damage, memory loss, cognitive dysfunction and death. "These are serious risks that FDA and psychiatrists have minimized and, in the case of brain damage, covered up, to protect mental health industry profits."



CCHR's mission is to eradicate abuses committed under the guise of mental health and enact patient and consumer protections.

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*Jan Eastgate, president of the international mental health watchdog CCHR*

Eastgate said the language of the Order, which makes the device Class II for treatment of three “mental disorders,” is “smoke and mirrors,” intended to deceive people that something dangerous is safe, scientific and helpful. It’s not, as thousands of patients attest.”

She pointed to how horrified people were about the sequel to *The Wizard of Oz*, when 9-year-old Dorothy, believed to be delusional because of her belief in Oz, is strapped to a mental hospital bed to be electroshocked. Dorothy is saved by a mysterious girl who unstraps her and tells her

to run. That was fiction but in real life, children and adults cannot be saved from the FDA’s frightening decision.

Not only did the agency reduce the age limit from 18 to 13 for ECT, it reasserted that it would not regulate how the device is used by psychiatrists. “This means psychiatrists can electroshock anyone, including children and the elderly for any disorder with impunity, as the Order only regulates marketing of the device. Yet FDA was put on notice that children aged five and younger are being electroshocked,” Eastgate said.

The ECT device was grandfathered in under FDA law in 1976 and classified as a high-risk Class III

device. Twice, Congress mandated the FDA ensure such devices undergo the approval process called a Premarket Approval (PMA) application in order to stay on the market. But Eastgate says, "That posed a problem for the American Psychiatric Association and FDA as it was known ECT device makers—Somatics Inc. and Mecta Corp—would not conduct the clinical trial a PMA required to prove safety and efficacy. To circumvent this, FDA opened a Public Docket to discuss making the device Class II, which does not require a PMA, then relied upon submissions and studies favorable to this."

On December 26, 2018, the FDA issued a "split classification": Class II for "treating catatonia or a severe major depressive episode associated with [major depressive disorder](#) or bipolar disorder in patients age 13 years and older..." And Class III for any other "mental disorder."

- Eastgate points to how illogical a split classification is. "The FDA was questioned but never answered how it scientifically determined that electricity administered to the brain can differentiate between mental disorders and determine which ones will be at risk and which won't."

- The FDA ignored the fact that ECT causes brain damage, citing a discussion on the issue at its January 2011 Neurological Devices Advisory Panel hearing on ECT. This ignored basic electrical science that when electricity is sent through the brain, it is converted into heat, increasing the temperature. Cells can suffer dysfunction, temporary injury, permanent damage or even cell death.

- A second effect results from the pulsing nature of the voltage applied. According to Dr. Ken Castleman, Ph.D., biomedical engineer and author of the seminal textbook Digital Image Processing, "This process of alternately pulling and tugging on the cell membrane creates a jackhammer effect that can tear holes in cell walls. This process is called 'electroporation,' the creation of pores (holes) in the cell wall by electrical means, leading to the alteration or destruction of cell membranes." [1]



The Citizens Commission on Human Rights is a non-profit mental health watchdog dedicated to the eradication of abuses committed under the guise of mental health.



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• Yet the FDA disagrees that ECT presents “an unreasonable risk of injury.” CCHR’s review of a sample 64 studies FDA relied upon found no definitive scientific evidence of ECT being “safe and effective.” One study stated “clinical efficacy was quite low” and nearly all studies used terms such as “seems,” “suggests,” or “appears,” while some studies were too small to provide a conclusive result.

• A Citizens Petition filed with the FDA Commissioner in 2016 calling for PMAs or a ban on ECT, pointed to an Australian law that bans ECT on those younger than 14, with criminal penalties if administered. FDA said the agency only regulates devices based on federal FDA law. It failed to mention U.S. state laws—California, Colorado, Tennessee and Texas—that ban ECT on children, including older than 13, and FDA should have relied upon these.

In Return to Oz, Dorothy is programmed to believe the Electroshock Machine is a friend. “Dr. Worley” tells her that it is harmless. But the machine in this fictitious land is used to mentally damage citizens and drive them insane. “So it is with real ECT devices today and the FDA’s Final Order has only inspired increased commitment to get this mentally damaging machine banned and to obtain a Congressional investigation into the FDA,” Eastgate said.

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 visit [www.cchrflorida.org](http://www.cchrflorida.org)

Sources:

[1] Ken Casselman, Ph.D., “Expert Report on Electroconvulsive,” Sept. 2019

[2] <https://www.madinamerica.com/2018/11/ect-manufacturer-warns-permanent-brain-damage/>

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