

# Watchdog's Research on Psychotropic Drug Risks Expands as Usage Soars

*CCHR is speeding up its research on drug agency warnings and studies showing drug risks in response to antidepressant and anti-anxiety drug scripts increasing*

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, April 21, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Mental health watchdog group, [Citizens Commission on Human Rights International](#) is updating its online [Psychiatric Drugs Side Effects Database](#) with new studies and adverse drug reactions so that consumers are better informed. They've increased research in light of an analysis by Express Scripts which found that prescriptions per week for antidepressants, anti-anxiety and anti-insomnia drugs increased by 21% between February 16 and March 15, peaking the week of March 15 when the Coronavirus was deemed a pandemic. CCHR expects this rise has continued during COVID-19 regulations and recent claims of "Americans are turning to medications for relief."



CCHR is speeding up its research on drug agency warnings and studies showing drug risks to add to its free online psychiatric drugs side effects database, in response to antidepressant and anti-anxiety drug scripts increasing

There was a 39.6% increase in anti-anxiety drugs given women, compared to 22.7% to men.

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*CCHR International*

Between 2015 and 2019, for people between the ages of 13 and 19, antidepressant use also increased by 38.3%.[1] Yet, the Food and Drug Administration warns that for this age group the drugs can induce suicidal behavior.[2]

CCHR Int's side effects database already reports more than 150 drug regulatory agency warnings about antidepressants alone causing cardiovascular and other heart problems, hostility, aggression, agitation, insomnia, anxiety, sexual dysfunction and suicide.[3]

Researchers Martin Plöderl, Ph.D. and Michael P. Hengartner, PD. warned: "If you look at the past 10 years, antidepressant rates are associated with increased suicide rates," the drugs "most likely cause suicidal behavior in young people" and "data strongly suggest that antidepressants can cause suicides and aggressive behavior.[4] CCHR says that with concerns about suicide in relation to COVID-19, the last thing needed is the population on drugs that can induce suicide.

More studies are emerging on antidepressant dangers. On April 8, The Pharmaceutical Journal reported that "antidepressant withdrawal can be a horrible experience." A systematic review

found that around 56% of people experience antidepressant withdrawal. James Davies, reader in social anthropology and mental health at the University of Roehampton, and the lead author of the review, worries that the lack of recognition of withdrawal risks “leads many doctors to misdiagnose withdrawal symptoms as relapse,” and unnecessarily and harmfully prescribe antidepressants for the long term.[5]

The journal BMC Psychiatry published a study which found that all SSRI antidepressant trials were “at high risk of bias and the clinical significance seems questionable. SSRIs significantly increase the risk of both serious and non-serious adverse events. The potential small beneficial effects seem to be outweighed by harmful effects.”[6]

A just-published study in the International Journal of Risk and Safety in Medicine reports that nearly every medical website and resource on antidepressant drug side effects have hugely downplayed the drugs' risks. Researchers applied a checklist of 14 criteria to prominent websites from 10 different countries in which antidepressants are widely prescribed. As reported in Psychology Today, “They found a pattern both consistent and global, especially concerning antidepressant withdrawal, suicidality, and sexual and other side effects. Due in part to drug company sponsorship and related commercial pressures, the websites' listing of the benefits and harms of antidepressants was found repeatedly to ‘conflict with the scientific evidence.’”[7]

Twenty-nine (74%) of the websites attributed depression to a “chemical imbalance,” a notion debunked more than a decade ago, but one that websites continue to suggest can be fixed and corrected, Psychology Today reported.[8] CCHR says such a claim should constitute consumer fraud.

Joanna Moncrieff, MD, Professor of Critical and Social Psychiatry at University College London and works as a consultant in community psychiatry says that “more than 50 years of intense research efforts have failed to identify depression in the brain.”[9]

Psychiatrists, such as Ronald Pies, writing in Medscape, even admitted “...the ‘chemical imbalance theory’ was never a real theory, nor was it widely propounded by responsible practitioners in the field of psychiatry.”[10] Yet the American Psychiatric Association still has on its website, “Psychiatric medications can help correct imbalances in brain chemistry that are thought to be involved in some mental disorders.”[11]

In an April 2020 Psychiatric Times interview with Dr. Moncrieff, she said, “The idea that we can pin down the biological mechanisms of complex human thoughts, feelings and behaviors is part of the problem with our thinking in my view. We cannot do this now, and we have no indication that we will be able to do so in the future—a view put forward in critical neuroscience too...”[12]

Dr. Moncrieff's comments are poignant considering the COVID-19 virus has led to less restrictions on psychiatrists prescribing psychoactive drugs over the internet. She stated: “...I believe psychiatry is a fundamentally political activity. It is one of the informal social control apparatus that society has delegated to manage behavior that is socially problematic. Calling it a medical specialty disguises this fact and deprives people of the level of oversight and scrutiny that would be considered necessary if this was acknowledged.”[13]

CCHR wants people better informed if advised to take psychotropic drugs during these current times when they are most vulnerable. As these drugs don't cure, and the temporary “relief” people may feel subsides, this can lead to the recommendation of adding an antipsychotic to an antidepressant. Antipsychotics can permanently damage the nervous system.[14] Electroshock treatment—the passage of 460 volts of electricity through the brain, further damaging it, could also be prescribed. Sign [CCHR's Petition to Ban ECT](#).

All this can make recovery impossible, CCHR says.

CCHR is the mental health watchdog responsible for more than 180 laws that now protect patients from damaging practices. DONATE to support its work here:  
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