

Experts by Experience Share Akathisia Stories

Akathisia Awareness Can Reduce Iatrogenic Suicide

CHICAGO, IL, US, August 6, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Institute for Safe Medication Practices states a "fundamental strategy to create change is a simple one—to create compelling stories about medication errors and impactful change strategies to draw attention to problems and encourage people to act." This strategy is the cornerstone of the Akathisia Stories podcast series produced by MISSD and Andy Miles of Chicago's Studio C.

Today's [episode seven features Janet Schiel](#) who discusses her husband Joe's avoidable death weeks after he started Lexapro. "I watched him change and become depressed and paranoid," said Schiel. "I knew Joe very well given we were married for decades. After I noticed he was exhibiting behaviors that were not part of his normal personality, I finally said to him about three weeks into this, 'What are you taking?'"



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[The Medication Induced Suicide Prevention and Education Foundation](#) in Memory of Stewart Dolin (MISSD) was founded after Stewart Dolin died while suffering from akathisia days after he started taking Paxil. Paxil and Lexapro are both selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) that are marketed as antidepressants and often prescribed "off label" for reasons not related to depression. Like Joe, Stewart was not depressed and had been prescribed the SSRI for mild situational anxiety.

"Akathisia is a disorder, induced as a side effect of medications, which can cause a person to

experience such intense inner restlessness that the sufferer is driven to violence, self-harm and/or suicide," said Wendy Dolin, founder of MISSD. "It can occur when stopping, starting, or changing the dosage or type of certain medications. Akathisia can lead to iatrogenic suicide. Iatrogenic means caused by medication or medical treatment."

SSRIs carry the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) black box warning of possible increased risks of suicidality for ages 24 and under. However, SSRIs can cause akathisia in all age groups. The FDA black box warning is the most serious warning available. Other drugs that can cause akathisia include pharmaceutical products prescribed for acne, malaria, asthma, and high blood pressure.

"It is important that health care consumers and caregivers carefully read all patient information leaflets and be aware of adverse drug effects that can cause suicidal thoughts, suicidal actions, and iatrogenic death," said Dolin. "Given that some of the drugs explored as possible COVID-19 treatments can also cause akathisia, now more than ever, it is time to take akathisia out of the darkness. We know that akathisia awareness can save lives."

MISSD offers a variety of resources to increase public awareness of this drug-induced disorder. In addition to the Akathisia Stories podcast series, MISSD has an [accredited, online course](#), two public health videos, and several presentations to national and international organizations that can be viewed on its YouTube channel.

MISSD, a 501c3 non-profit organization, honors the memory of akathisia victims through awareness and education and aims to ensure people suffering from akathisia's symptoms are accurately diagnosed so that needless deaths are prevented. The foundation accepts no funding from the pharmaceutical industry and it provides all educational resources to the public free of charge.

Wendy Dolin

MISSD

+1 8479102346

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