

# Psychiatry's 60-year-old 'scientific' theory of depression finally overturned?

KAOHSIUNG, TAIWAN, September 12, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Citizens Commission on Human Rights \(CCHR\)](#) is a 53-year-old international organization, human rights in the field of mental health. Recently International CCHR issued a statement to the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) urging all its psychiatrists to remove from the website any topic of "brain chemistry imbalances leading to mental disorders". [1]



psychiatric drugs

A landmark study has debunked one of the biggest mental healthcare marketing campaigns in modern history—that a “[chemical imbalance](#) in the brain causes depression” requiring antidepressants to correct it. Scientists at the University College London reviewed 17 major

studies published over several decades and found no convincing evidence to support the theory. [2] The research confirms what CCHR has been exposing since the late 1980s: the chemical imbalance theory has always been a marketing campaign with no basis in science. The fact is, the chemical imbalance myth has helped drive \$15.6 billion-a-year global antidepressant sales. In light of the study's damning findings, media dubbed this the “\$15 billion hustle.”

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The popularity of the ‘chemical imbalance’ theory has coincided with a huge increase in the use of antidepressants.”

*Joanna Moncrieff*

Lead author Professor Joanna Moncrieff said: “The popularity of the ‘chemical imbalance’ theory has coincided with a huge increase in the use of antidepressants.” [2]

Although the theory dates back to the 1950s, it was used in the late 1980s to launch the first SSRI antidepressant, Prozac (fluoxetine) as the next “revolution in mental health treatment” and was marketed in more than 90 countries. By 2005, more than 54 million people worldwide were taking antidepressants to treat a non-existent chemical imbalance. [3] That figure nearly doubled to 100 million in 2016.

In the U.S. today, an astonishing 45 million Americans of all ages take antidepressants, of which 2.1 million are aged 0-17, per statistics CCHR obtained from IQ Via data tracking.

The study, published in *Molecular Psychiatry*, says the general public has been falsely led to believe that abnormalities in serotonin or other biochemical abnormalities are responsible for their moods. The idea that depression is the result of a chemical imbalance has influenced people's decisions about whether to take or continue antidepressants and "may discourage people from discontinuing treatment, potentially leading to lifelong dependence on these drugs." [2]

Since 1989, following the approval of Prozac in the U.S., CCHR has exposed the chemical imbalance lie and the disservice to consumers who were told this.

In 1991, CCHR helped instigate a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory panel hearing into the evidence that Prozac could induce violent and suicidal behavior. [4] The finding of this had the potential to adversely impact the newly launched marketing of the idea that a chemical imbalance caused depression, if the drugs prescribed to treat it could chemically induce violence. It was not surprising that the psychiatrists on the panel, steeped in conflicts of interests with antidepressant manufacturers, rejected the evidence.

The "chemical imbalance" theory potentially spawned other dangerous ideas such as that the "serotonin deficiency hypothesis" could be responsible for violent behavior—rather than the drugs used to treat it. [5] Psychiatrists and colleagues continued to reject the evidence that antidepressants can induce violent adverse reactions in some people taking them, while wide usage of antidepressants has coincided with increased acts of senseless violence in schools and the community.

In February 2022, the UN Human Rights Commissioner reported that there is an overreliance on mental health drugs which are a "significant obstacle to the realization of the right to health." [6]

The chemical imbalance lie has been one of the most significant obstacles.

CCHR Taiwan, the Taiwan chapter of CCHR, also urge the Taiwan Psychiatric Association and its members to remove the statements and messages that "low serotonin causes depression" as soon as possible. Because those statements have no scientific basis.

[1] <https://www.cchrint.org/2022/08/04/an-open-letter-to-the-world-psychiatric-association/>

[2] Joanna Moncrieff, Ruth E. Cooper, Tom Stockmann, Simone Amendola, Michael P. Hengartner and Mark A. Horowitz, "The serotonin theory of depression: a systematic umbrella review of the evidence," *Molecular Psychiatry*, 20 July 2022, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41380-022-01661-0>

[3] Melissa Braddock, "Prozac: Purpose Antidepressant," Chemical & Engineering News, 20 June 2005, <https://cen.acs.org/articles/83/i25/Prozac.html>

[4] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxJomeak4V4>

[5] <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-serotonin/serotonin-levels-affect-brains-response-to-anger-idUSTRE78E6D420110915>; <https://www.news-medical.net/health/Serotonin-and-Aggression.aspx>

[6] Annual report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General, 49th session, 28 Feb.–1 Apr. 2022

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