

New Research Links Vitamin to Significantly Reduced Risk of Suicidal Behavior and Intentional Self-Harm

New study suggests folic acid may be a safe, inexpensive and widely available treatment for suicidal behavior.

WASHINGTON, DC, US, December 28, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new study suggests a safe and effective remedy for depression might be found in a vitamin bottle. Researchers found that among patients who filled prescriptions for folic acid, also known as vitamin B9, there was a substantial reduction in suicide attempts and intentional self-harm.

The study is a follow-up to a 2019 drug-safety study, in which researchers identified prescription drugs associated with an increased or decreased risk of suicide attempts and found, unexpectedly, that folic acid was among the prescriptions most associated with decreased risk. [1] Folic acid is often prescribed during pregnancy to prevent birth defects or is prescribed to prevent a folic acid deficiency resulting from taking certain medications.

In the current study, the same researchers further explored the vitamin's association with a lower risk of suicidal events. They analyzed the insurance claims of 866,586 adults during the 24-month period after the patients filled a prescription for folic acid.

Their findings, published in JAMA Psychiatry, reaffirmed that taking folic acid is linked to a substantial (44%) reduction in suicide attempts and intentional self-harm. "Folic acid treatment was associated with a significantly reduced rate of suicidal events," the researchers found. [2]

Adding to the validity of their findings is the fact that every additional month of treatment with



Vitamin B9 (folic acid) has no real side effects, is inexpensive, and may potentially save tens of thousands of lives, say researchers who are continuing to study the vitamin's potential use as mental health treatment.

folic acid was associated with a 5% reduction in the suicidal event rate. Further still, to rule out the possibility that the lower suicide risk was due to people taking vitamin supplements to improve their health – people who might be less likely to attempt suicide anyway, the researchers conducted a similar analysis with another vitamin, B12, and found no association with the risk of suicide.



Folic acid (Vitamin B9) was among the prescription drugs most associated with a decreased risk of suicide attempts.

“There are no real side effects, it doesn’t cost a lot of money, you can get it without a prescription,” said lead author John Gibbons, PhD, professor of biostatistics and medicine at the University of Chicago, quoted in the University’s press release. “This could potentially save tens of thousands of lives.”

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*John Gibbons, PhD, professor
of biostatistics & medicine,
Univ. of Chicago*

Researchers are now planning a further follow-up with a large-scale randomized controlled trial (RCT), considered the gold standard for research, giving one group folic acid and another group placebos, in seeking to confirm that folic acid directly causes a lower risk of suicidal thoughts and attempted or completed suicides. “If confirmed, folic acid may be a safe, inexpensive, and widely available treatment for suicidal ideation and behavior,” wrote Gibbons.

A safe and effective vitamin supplement to reduce the risk of suicidal thoughts and actions would be a welcome alternative to antidepressants, powerful mind-altering drugs that recent research has found ineffective and carrying risks of harmful side effects for patients when taking or discontinuing them.

Some 45 million Americans are currently prescribed antidepressant drugs, whose side effects include insomnia, emotional dulling, sexual dysfunction, anxiety, irritability, hostility, aggressiveness, loss of judgment, and the impulsivity and mania that can lead to violence and suicidal thoughts and actions.

Worse still, those who want to stop taking antidepressants risk serious withdrawal symptoms such as flu-like symptoms, stroke-like symptoms, the feeling of electric shocks in the head (“brain

zaps”), nausea, amnesia, difficulty concentrating, anxiety, sleep problems, aggression, hallucinations, mood swings, depression and suicidal thoughts. Withdrawal symptoms can persist for a year or more. [3]

The longer antidepressants are taken and the higher the dose, the more severe and prolonged the withdrawal symptoms may be, causing an untold number of users to give up trying and instead remain on a drug they no longer want. Doctors and patients may even mistakenly believe that the withdrawal symptoms are evidence of a relapse into depression.

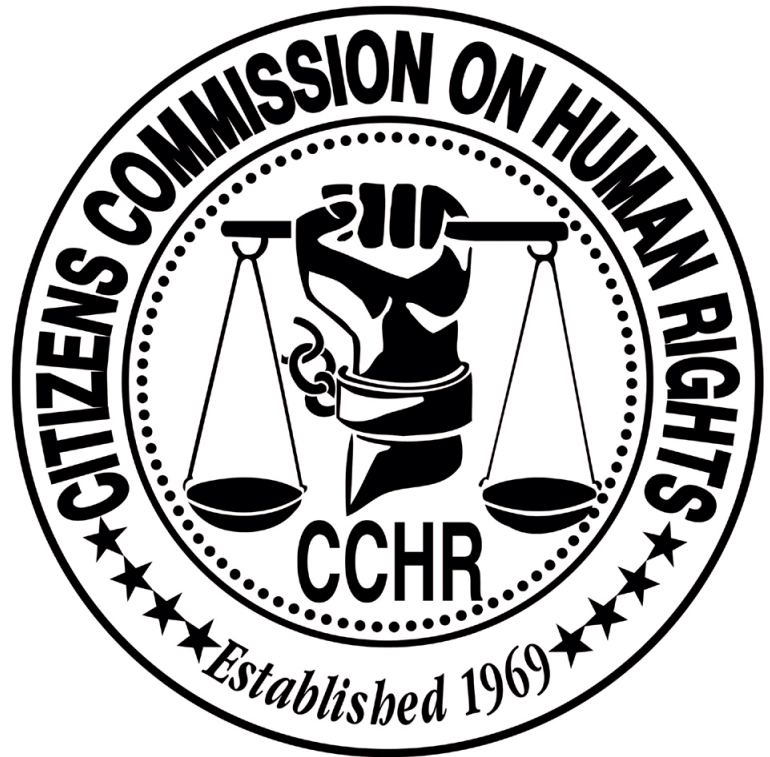
“Some 15.5 million American have taken antidepressants for at least five years,” according to science reporter Benedict Carey, writing in the New York Times in 2018. “The rate has almost doubled since 2010, and more than tripled since 2000,” he added. [4]

“What you see is the number of long-term users just piling up year after year,” said Dr. Mark Olfson, a professor of psychiatry at Columbia University, quoted in Carey’s article.

Even the rationale for prescribing antidepressants – to correct a supposed chemical imbalance in the brain – has been questioned by researchers who conducted a comprehensive review, which for the first time integrated all relevant research, to evaluate whether scientific evidence supported the theory that a low level of the brain chemical serotonin caused depression.

“The serotonin theory of depression has been one of the most influential and extensively researched biological theories of the origins of depression,” wrote lead author Joanna Moncrief in *Molecular Psychiatry* in July. “Our study shows that this view is not supported by scientific evidence. It also calls into question the basis for the use of antidepressants.” [5]

The Citizens Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) continues to raise public awareness of the risks of serious side effects and withdrawal symptoms from antidepressants and other psychiatric drugs, so that consumers and their physicians can make fully informed decisions about starting or stopping the drugs. CCHR supports safe and science-based non-drug



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approaches to mental health.

WARNING: Anyone wishing to discontinue or change the dose of an antidepressant or other psychiatric drug is cautioned to do so only under the supervision of a physician because of potentially dangerous withdrawal symptoms.

The Citizens Commission on Human Rights was co-founded in 1969 by members of the Church of Scientology and the late psychiatrist and humanitarian Thomas Szasz, M.D., recognized by many academics as modern psychiatry's most authoritative critic, to eradicate abuses and restore human rights and dignity to the field of mental health. CCHR has been instrumental in obtaining 228 laws against psychiatric abuses and violations of human rights worldwide.

The CCHR National Affairs Office in Washington, DC, has advocated for mental health rights and protections at the state and federal level. The CCHR traveling exhibit, which has toured 441 major cities worldwide and educated over 800,000 people on the history to the present day of abusive and racist psychiatric practices, has been displayed at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Conference in Washington, DC, and at other locations.

[1] <https://hdsr.mitpress.mit.edu/pub/18lm7jrp/release/16>

[2] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36169979>

[3] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29758951/>

[4] <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/07/health/antidepressants-withdrawal-prozac-cymbalta.html>

[5] <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41380-022-01661-0.pdf>

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