

Watchdog Says Studies Prove Antidepressants Cause Withdrawal Symptoms

CCHR conducted a review of studies on antidepressant withdrawal, verifying that symptoms associated with stopping antidepressants are real and can be severe

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, March 21, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- IQVia, the largest vendor of U.S. physician prescribing data, reports that [45 million Americans are taking antidepressants](#). Of these, 2.1 million are children aged 0-17.[1] Given the widespread use of these drugs, it is imperative to understand their potential side effects, including antidepressant withdrawal symptoms, which can be severe. Citizens Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) International cites numerous studies highlighting the fact that antidepressant withdrawal is a real phenomenon that has been studied extensively in recent years.



CCHR International, the mental health industry watchdog, conducted a review of numerous studies on antidepressant withdrawal, verifying that symptoms associated with stopping antidepressants are real and can be severe. CCHR says patients need to be warned of such risks.

It is now widely accepted that prolonged use of antidepressants can lead to withdrawal symptoms. A systematic review published in 2019 identified 14 relevant studies which estimated the risk of antidepressant withdrawal. The results showed that 27% to 86% (or a weighted average of 56%) of patients experienced discontinuation symptoms when stopping the drugs.[2]

A Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) found discontinuation symptoms in 35% of patients taking one antidepressant.[3] John Read, Ph.D., professor of clinical psychology at the University of East London, stated, "Withdrawal effects aren't rare, they aren't short-lived and they've been dismissed by drug companies for decades." [4]

Common withdrawal symptoms include flu-like symptoms, insomnia, nausea, imbalance, sensory disturbances, and dizziness. Other studies have reported similar results including headaches, vertigo, anxiety, depression and mood swings, electric shock sensations in the head known as “brain zaps”, problems with movement, lethargy, appetite changes, nightmares, hallucinations, and even homicidal and suicidal ideation.[5] And these effects can last for years.

According to a [Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics Journal study](#), post-withdrawal symptoms “may last several months to years.”[6] Another study published in the Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin, a British Medical Journal publication, found that there is increasing recognition that withdrawal symptoms from antidepressants are common and can be severe and long-lasting in some patients.[7]

Dr. Joseph Glenmullen, a clinical instructor in psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, said, “We see antidepressant withdrawal symptoms that can be so severe, that patients feel held hostage to the antidepressant.”

In conclusion, it is clear from the available evidence that prolonged use of antidepressants can lead to withdrawal symptoms which can range from mild to severe depending on the individual's circumstances. CCHR says that patients are rarely warned of the risks of withdrawal when they are prescribed antidepressants, a violation of informed consent.

When it comes to discontinuing antidepressants, it is vital that no one attempts to stop their use without medical supervision. Going off of antidepressants without medical supervision can potentially cause serious adverse events.

For an overview of antidepressant drug regulatory agency warnings, studies, and documented side effects, visit: <https://www.cchr.org/psychiatric-drugs/antidepressantsideeffects/>

[1] <https://www.cchr.org/psychiatric-drugs/people-taking-psychiatric-drugs/>

[2] James Davies and John Read, “A systematic review into the incidence, severity and duration of antidepressant withdrawal effects: Are guidelines evidence-based?” Addictive Behaviors, 97 (2019), p. 111,
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0306460318308347?via%3Dihub>

[3] Ibid.

[4] <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2020/04/stop-antidepressants>

[5] Joseph Glenmullen, M.D., The Antidepressant Solution: A Step-by-Step Guide to Safely Overcoming Antidepressant Withdrawal, Dependence, and "Addiction" (Free Press, 2006), pp. 7, 36-38

[6] Carlotta Belaise, et al., "Patient Online Report of Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor-Induced Persistent Post-withdrawal Anxiety and Mood Disorders," *Psychother Psychosom*, 2012;81:386-388

[7] Mark Horowitz and Michael Wilcock, "Newer generation antidepressants and withdrawal effects: reconsidering the role of antidepressants and helping patients to stop," *Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin*, 2022;60:7-12

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