New Study Links Suicides to Antidepressants Reinforcing FDA's Black Box Warning

A recent study confirms antidepressant use is linked to an alarming increase in suicidality. CCHR says study findings reinforce the FDA's 2004 black box warning

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, April 25, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new study published in Ethical Human Psychology and Psychiatry has uncovered a startling number of antidepressant-related suicides that occurred between 2003 and 2020. CCHR says the results of this study simply reinforce the 2004 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) black box warning on antidepressant use increasing the risk of suicidal ideation.

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> *Dr. John Read, Professor of Clinical Psychology, University of East London*

The University of East London study reviewed media reports on nearly 8,000 coroners' inquests and found that antidepressants were linked to 2,718 cases of hanging and 933 overdose deaths. It also found that the use of the drugs was associated with another 979 suicides caused by such things as jumping or falling to their death, drowning, shooting themselves, or being involved in a fire or electrocution.[1]

The author of the study, Dr. John Read, Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of East London, stated, "If preventing suicide is a primary reason for prescribing ADs [Antidepressants] this data set includes several thousand people for whom the drugs clearly did not work."[2] Further, "Not only do antidepressants not reduce suicidality, but they also actually increase it for many, and for some they provide the mechanism for killing oneself."[3]

The study concluded that "ADs are ineffective for many people. The reports document the deaths of several thousand people who killed themselves despite being on ADs, and more than a thousand who actually used the drugs that were supposed to alleviate their depression to kill themselves."

While these findings are certainly unsettling, they shouldn't come as a shock; nearly two decades ago, in 2004, the FDA finally issued a black box warning on the increased risks for suicidality

among children and adolescents taking antidepressants.[4] The black box warning was long overdue. As far back as 1991, and largely due to CCHR's efforts, the FDA held hearings into the antidepressant drug fluoxetine, where dozens of consumers testified that the drug had turned people with no previous history of psychosis, suicidal and homicidal. However, due to the vested interests of the voting FDA board members, no action was taken to protect the public. It would take another 13 years for the FDA, under intense pressure from Congress, to finally issue the agency's strongest warning, the black box, confirming that antidepressants can cause suicidal thoughts and actions in those 18 years of age and younger. This was later extended to age 24.

CCHR is calling for greater disclosure of the risks of antidepressant side effects. To ensure patients have all the necessary information, physicians must be diligent in providing full disclosure of any potential adverse reactions—including suicidal tendencies.

Despite these warnings, many in the public remain unaware of antidepressant risks, including suicidal ideation. And the number of people prescribed antidepressants in the U.S. is startling. According to IQVia (formerly IMS Health), a leading pharmaceutical analytics company:

- 45 million Americans are prescribed antidepressants, of which:
- 2.1 million are children and adolescents aged 0-17.
- 35,216 are children aged 0-5.[5]

Underlying all of this though is the justification for administering antidepressants—the chemical imbalance theory. But the theory has been found to be scientifically false. In 2022, a groundbreaking study led by Dr. Joanna Moncrieff, Professor of Critical and Social Psychiatry at University College London, revealed that the most widely-used antidepressant campaigns in history, which claimed a chemical imbalance was to blame for depression and required antidepressants to correct it, is unsupported by any scientific evidence. After examining 17 major studies spanning decades, researchers concluded there is no convincing proof behind this assertion.[6]

CCHR is calling for greater disclosure of the risks of antidepressant side effects. To ensure patients have all the necessary information, physicians must be diligent in providing full disclosure of any potential adverse reactions—including suicidal tendencies as a possible side effect. Consumers should familiarize themselves with the FDA's Medication Guides, which are

available online, and specifically warn of the increased risk of suicidal thoughts or actions.

For more information about antidepressant side effects visit:
https://www.cchrint.org/psychiatric-drugs/antidepressantsideeffects/

[1] John Read, Ph.D., "Antidepressants and Suicide: 7,829 Inquests in England and Wales, 2003–2020," Ethical Human Psychology and Psychiatry, 2023, Vol. 25, Issue 1, DOI: 10.1891/EHPP-2022-0015, https://connect.springerpub.com/content/sgrehpp/25/1/8

[2] Ibid.

[3] Sarah Knapton, "Antidepressants increase the risk of suicide for some patients, scientists warn," The Telegraph, 17 Apr. 2023, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/04/17/antidepressants-suicide-drugs-prozac-research/

[4] https://www.fda.gov/drugs/postmarket-drug-safety-information-patients-and-providers/suicidality-children-and-adolescents-being-treated-antidepressant-medications

[5] https://www.cchrint.org/psychiatric-drugs/people-taking-psychiatric-drugs/

[6] Joanna Moncrieff, et al., "The serotonin theory of depression: a systematic umbrella review of the evidence," Molecular Psychiatry (2022), https://doi.org/10.1038/s41380-022-01661-0

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