

# Human Rights Group Calls for Government Investigation of Psychiatric Drugs' Link to Violence After Maine Mass Shooting

*Analysis of the FDA's Adverse Event Reporting System in 2010 found that 25 of the 31 prescription drugs most associated with violence were psychiatric drugs.*

WASHINGTON, DC, US, November 1, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Within weeks after receiving inpatient psychiatric treatment this summer, Robert Card went on a shooting rampage October 25 in Lewiston, Maine, killing 18 people before taking his own life. His recent psychiatric history included hearing voices and behaving erratically before being admitted to a psychiatric facility for two weeks in July, according to published [reports](#).



At least 49 international drug regulatory agency warnings have been issued on psychiatric drugs for the risks of aggression, hostility, mania, psychosis, and violence.

While it is not known exactly what psychiatric treatment he received either before or during that inpatient stay, psychotropic drugs would typically be prescribed – drugs with known links to aggression, mania, psychosis, suicide and acts of violence, including homicide.

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[People on antidepressants can] feel like jumping out of their skin. The irritability and impulsivity can make people suicidal or homicidal.”

*Joseph Glenmullen, MD,  
Harvard Medical School  
psychiatrist*

In light of this most recent mass shooting, the Citizens Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) again calls for a federal investigation into the link between mind-altering psychotropic drugs and senseless acts of violence.

An analysis of the FDA's Adverse Event Reporting System in

2010 found that 31 out of 484 prescription drugs were [disproportionately](#) associated with violence, and 25 of those 31 were psychiatric drugs.

At least 49 international drug regulatory agency warnings have been issued on psychiatric drugs for the [risks](#) of aggression, hostility, mania, psychosis, and violence. These warnings have been issued in the United States, European Union, Japan, United Kingdom, Australia and Canada.

Recent mass shootings have led to calls for more access to mental health services, but increasing behavioral screening and treatment in recent years have not stopped the senseless acts of violence from becoming all too commonplace. As a public health and public safety matter, answers are needed to the question of what is driving individuals to commit these horrific acts of violence at a pace the U.S. has never before experienced.

Many mass shootings have been linked to prior mental health treatment and programs in schools, detention centers and psychiatric facilities, and to the psychiatric drugs prescribed as treatment, most especially selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) antidepressants. The link between violence and psychiatric drugs must be investigated to understand this factor's apparent role in the ongoing violence in America.

CCHR issued its report, "Psychiatric Drugs Create Violence and Suicide," in 2018, detailing 60 cases of high-profile violence committed by perpetrators of all ages who had been prescribed psychotropic drugs as mental health treatment. [1]

Among the senseless acts of violence is the 2012 mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, where Adam Lanza shot and killed 20 children and six school personnel before committing suicide. The toxicology results revealing what psychiatric drugs he had been taking were withheld from the public after the assistant attorney general argued in a lawsuit over access to the information that the release might cause people not to want to take their psychiatric drugs. [2]

Antidepressants are the most prescribed class of psychiatric drugs. Currently, over 45 million Americans are prescribed antidepressants, with about 800,000 of them children and teens under the age of 18. Well-known side effects of SSRI antidepressants include anxiety, agitation,



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aggression, impulsiveness, mania, and suicidal thoughts and actions.

Psychiatrist Peter Breggin, M.D., describes antidepressants as neurotoxic because they harm and disrupt the functions of the brain, causing abnormal thinking and behavior that includes the anxiety, aggressiveness, loss of judgment, impulsivity and mania that can lead to violence. He adds that "the harmful mental and behavioral effects of antidepressants are especially prevalent and severe in children and youth."

Dr. Joseph Glenmullen, a Harvard Medical School psychiatrist, said people who take antidepressants can "become very distraught. ... They feel like jumping out of their skin. The irritability and impulsivity can make people suicidal or homicidal."

In 2016, an analysis of clinical trials in which SSRI and SNRI (serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor) antidepressants were given to healthy adults with no signs of depression found that antidepressants doubled the risk of suicidality and violence. [3]

Until an investigation is undertaken into the link between the increasing use of mind-altering psychiatric drugs and the growing number of acts of senseless violence, Americans may be denied the opportunity to find workable solutions to the real causes of the violence plaguing the nation.

The Citizens Commission on Human Rights continues to raise public awareness and advocate for the full disclosure of the risks of serious side effects and withdrawal symptoms from psychiatric drugs, so that consumers and their physicians can make fully informed decisions about starting or stopping the drugs.

CCHR recommends a complete physical examination with lab tests, nutritional and allergy screenings, and a review of all current medications to identify any physical causes of unwanted mental or behavioral symptoms, which might otherwise be misdiagnosed as a psychiatric



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disorder and incorrectly treated.

**WARNING:** Anyone wishing to discontinue or change the dose of a 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 hundreds of laws against psychiatric abuse 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 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 in Washington, DC, at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Conference and other locations.

[1] <https://www.cchr.org/pdfs/violence-report.pdf>

[2] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDq6eQJ9KJo>

[3] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5066537/>

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