

Drug Treatment For Depression Is Dead Wrong

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By [Nathaniel S. Lehrman, MD](#)

Psychiatry And The Growth Of Depression

Depression has become very big. Feelings of "helplessness, loss of hope, sadness, crying, sleep or appetite disturbances, or difficulty concentrating, for at least two straight weeks" are sufficient for the very common diagnosis of "clinical depression." Over the past half-century, hospitalizations for depression have increased almost thirty times, from 9.8 per 100,000 in 1943 (in New York, which had more per capita than any other state) to an estimated 280 per 100,000 (nationally) in 1994.

And that's only the beginning. Scientists estimated in 1997 that 18 million Americans suffer severe depression each year, with one in five of us experiencing a depressive episode during his or her lifetime (that's 20,000 per 100,000).

Drugs For Depression

Ann Landers maintained that 80% of depressions "can be treated successfully with medication" (listed first), "psychotherapy, or a combination of both," and noted happily that on National Depression Screening Day in 1998, more than 85,000 people visited screening sites, with over 70% of them then "referred for a full evaluation."

Some experts, claiming that 50 percent of "clinically depressed" people will have another episode, note that a growing number of doctors are writing prescriptions for them for years on end. One expert even insists "there is a subgroup of people who will stay on medication for the rest of their lives." These views of depression, based on today's drug-oriented approach to treatment, conflict almost totally with the experience of many, including myself, who treated depression successfully before the drug era began.

It is estimated that 28 million Americans now take prescribed (doctor-controlled) anti-depressant medications. Production of these drugs has consequently become a huge business, with "global sales estimated at \$6 billion a year and rising." Prozac sales alone amounted to more than \$1.7 billion in 1999 - a third of the Eli Lilly and Company's total business - while prescriptions for its major current competitors, Zoloft and Paxil, also continue to rise rapidly.

Despite the side-effects experienced by a quarter of Prozac users, Lilly recently spent \$15 million to advertise the drug directly to the public - to increase patients' demand for it from their physicians. And at a time that our churches, moral guides to the nation, face many grave financial problems, the major backer of the Public Broadcasting System's "Religion and Ethics Newsweekly" is the Lilly Foundation.

The Dangers Of Anti-Depressant Drugs

Although all the long-term side-effects of these central nervous system drugs are still not known, those which are known have evoked much less attention than they should. Anti-depressant drugs' greatest danger is their evocation of suicidal and/or homicidal feelings and behavior; both teenagers who attacked their fellow students at Columbine happened to be taking anti-depressants. Another danger from "feel-good" drugs is the creation of dependency or addiction.

Many who are hooked will turn to street drugs since they are cheaper, more available, often stronger - and under a user's own control, rather than under a doctor's.

We find ourselves in this increasingly difficult situation because psychiatry has badly mishandled depression in its all-consuming reliance on drugs as the first line of treatment.

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DR. MERCOLA'S COMMENT:

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The numbers in this article are quite compelling. Treating depression with drugs is becoming quite common and the number of people treated with drug therapy over the last ten years has increased by over 300%.

I used to be one of those drug-prescribing doctors. In the late 80s I put several thousand patients on drug therapy and they outwardly seemed to work well for many patients. One important caveat, however, is that in NO case did the drugs solve the underlying foundation reason as to why the person was depressed.

I discovered a highly effective technique last year called EFT: Emotional Freedom Technique. [EFT](#) uses psychological acupuncture techniques to treat depression, and I have found that my need to prescribe antidepressants has decreased to almost nothing. Since I discovered EFT, I can count the prescriptions I have written for drug therapy on one hand.

If you struggle with depression, one of the best things you could do would be to [find a qualified EFT practitioner](#). Once you're feeling better, I would suggest starting to follow my [eating plan](#).

Review my free EFT manual for an understanding of the basics of EFT or buy my [videos or DVDs](#); the material contained in this program will provide you with a basic foundation in EFT.

I don't recommend that any seriously depressed patient treat herself solely with EFT, but the videos do provide an easy way to try this technique. I do provide a one-year guarantee, so if you find you aren't satisfied with the material you can return them for a full refund.

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