

Cambridge, Massachusetts

## Excerpts from the Sept. 2007 AFFIDAVIT OF ROBERT WHITAKER

while writing a series for the Boston Globe during the summer of 1998, I came upon two studies that looked at long-term outcomes for schizophrenia patients that raised questions about this model of care. First, in 1994, Harvard researchers reported that outcomes for schizophrenia patients in the United States had declined in the past 20 years and were now no better than they had been in 1900.

4. I wrote *Mad in America*, in large part, to investigate why schizophrenia patients in the U.S. and other developed countries fare so poorly. A primary part of that task was researching the scientific literature on schizophrenia and antipsychotic drugs.

### II. Overview of Research Literature on Schizophrenia and Standard Antipsychotic Medications

5. Although the public has often been told that people with schizophrenia suffer from too much “dopamine” in the brain, researchers who investigated this hypothesis during the 1970s and 1980s were unable to find evidence that people so diagnosed have, in fact, overactive dopamine systems. Within the psychiatric research community, this was widely acknowledged in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As Pierre Deniker, who was one of the founding fathers of psychopharmacology, confessed in 1990: “The dopaminergic theory of schizophrenia retains little credibility for psychiatrists.”<sup>4</sup>

6. Since people with schizophrenia have no known “chemical imbalance” in the brain, antipsychotic drugs cannot be said to work by “balancing” brain chemistry. These drugs are not like “insulin for diabetes.” They do not serve as a corrective to a known biological abnormality. Instead, Thorazine and other standard antipsychotics (also known as neuroleptics) work by powerfully blocking dopamine transmission in the brain. Specifically, these drugs block 70% to 90% of a particular group of dopamine receptors known as D2 receptors. This thwarting of normal dopamine transmission is what causes the drugs to be so problematic in terms of their side effects.

there is a long line of evidence in the research literature, one that is not generally known by the public or even by most psychiatrists, that shows that these drugs, over time, produce these results:

a) They increase the likelihood that a person will become chronically ill.

b) They cause a host of debilitating side effects.

c) They lead to early death.

### III. Evidence Revealing Increased Chronicity of Psychotic Symptoms

Those findings led NIMH scientist William Carpenter to conclude that “antipsychotic medication may make some schizophrenic patients more vulnerable to future relapse than would be the case in the natural course of the illness.”

The two Canadian researchers wrote: “Neuroleptics can produce a dopamine supersensitivity that leads to both dyskinesic and psychotic symptoms. An implication is that the tendency toward psychotic relapse in a patient who had developed such a supersensitivity is determined by more than just the normal course of the illness. 11

d) This spring [2007], researchers at the University of Illinois Medical School reported on the long-term outcomes of schizophrenia patients in the Chicago area since 1990. They found that 40% of those who refused to take their antipsychotic medications were recovered at five-year and 15-year followup exams, versus five percent of the medicated patients.<sup>24</sup>

### V. Harmful Side Effects from Antipsychotic Medications

Schizophrenia patients now commit suicide at 20 times the rate they did prior to the use of neuroleptics.<sup>37</sup>

## VI. The Research Literature on Atypical Antipsychotics

Risperdal, Zyprexa, and Seroquel, to name three—it is now clear that the new drugs have no such advantage, and there is even evidence suggesting that they are worse than the old ones.

17. Risperdal, which is manufactured by Janssen, was approved in 1994. Although it was hailed in the press as a “breakthrough” medication, the FDA, in its review of the clinical trial data, concluded that there was no evidence that this drug was better or safer than Haldol (haloperidol.) The FDA told Janssen: “We would consider any advertisement or promotion labeling for RISPERDAL false, misleading, or lacking fair balance under section 501 (a) and 502 (n) of the ACT if there is presentation of data that conveys the impression that risperidone is superior to haloperidol or any other marketed antipsychotic drug product with regard to safety or effectiveness.”<sup>38</sup>

18. After Risperdal (risperidone) was approved, physicians who weren’t funded by Janssen were able to conduct independent studies of the drug. They concluded that risperidone, in comparison to Haldol, caused a higher incidence of Parkinsonian symptoms; that it was more likely to stir akathisia; and that many patients had to quit taking the drug because it didn’t knock down their psychotic symptoms.

the FDA, in its review of the trial data for Zyprexa, noted that Eli Lilly had designed its studies in ways that were “biased against haloperidol.” In fact, 20 of the 2500 patients treated with Zyprexa in the trials died. 20. There is now increasing recognition in scientific circles that the atypical antipsychotics are no better than the old drugs, and may in fact be worse.

Specifically:

b) In 2005, a National Institute of Mental Health study found that there were “no significant differences” between the old drugs and the atypicals in terms of their efficacy or how well patients tolerated them. Seventy-five percent of the 1432 patients in the study were unable to stay on antipsychotics owing to the drugs’ “inefficacy or intolerable side effects,” or for other reasons.<sup>47</sup>

c) In 2007, a study by the British government found that schizophrenia patients had better “quality of life” on the old drugs than on the new ones.

they also block a number of other neurotransmitter systems, most notably serotonin and glutamate [1/3 of the neurotransmitters in the brain—note by DC-H]]. As a result, they may cause a broader range of physical ailments, with diabetes and metabolic dysfunction particularly common for patients treated with Zyprexa. In a 2003 study of Irish patients, 25 of 72 patients (35%) died over a period of 7.5 years, leading the researchers to conclude that the risk of death for schizophrenics had “doubled” since the introduction of the atypical antipsychotics. <sup>49</sup>

## VII. Conclusion

21. In summary, the research literature reveals the following:

a) Antipsychotics increase the likelihood that a person will become chronically ill.

b) Long-term recovery rates are much higher for unmedicated patients than for those who are maintained on antipsychotic drugs.

c) Antipsychotics cause a host of debilitating physical, emotional and cognitive side effects, and lead to early death.

d) The new “atypical” antipsychotics are not better than the old ones in terms of their safety and tolerability, and quality of life may even be worse on the new drugs than on the old ones.