

Americans: Addicted, Addled, and Adrift



By Sidney Secular

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Big pharma spends \$15 billion per year on TV advertising, and they do it because it works. Americans, as if they had nothing better to do, watch more television than any other people in the world, and the lion's share of the commercials on those TVs are from pharmaceutical companies. Despite the litany of doleful/dreadful "side-effects" cited and sometimes belabored in those ads, we go ahead heedlessly and purchase them since we can't get over our addictions to the potions, nor do we have any notions to do so, being mesmerized by the medical men and their mouthpieces.

Big pharma is thus swimming in a cascade of cash that can be used to buy politicians, stuff upper management's pockets, or can be plowed back into research and development to create a panaloply of ever more addictive, potent pharmaceuticals to empty our pockets of whatever pocket change we have left after our budgets have been busted paying for today's outrageous food and housing costs.

Polling by KFF indicates that 13% of US adults are taking one pharmaceutical drug, another 11% are taking 2 of them, another 10% are taking 3 pharmaceuticals, and a whopping 27% of US adults are taking 4 or more such drugs. Putting those figures together, a solid majority of at least 61% of adults admit they are regularly taking at least one pharmaceutical drug.

Elderly Americans are the biggest victims and suckers. One study found that an estimated 89% of older adults took at least one prescription medication in the last 12 months.

Even if you aren't sick and have no real illnesses, the systematic TV advertising is designed to nudge you to find a reason for you to become a customer of big pharma. As an example, the percentage of Americans diagnosed with depression has more than tripled since 2005, increasing from 5.4% in 2005 to 18% in 2023, an all-time high. Act a bit sad, and they will be glad to get you going on the pills – and this is especially true for women, who use antidepressants at twice the rate of men, at nearly 18% of women aged 18 and older. A listing of the side effects of antidepressants can leave you depressed and includes difficulty urinating, drowsiness, dry mouth, constipation, easy bleeding and bruising, nausea, weight gain, insomnia, and sexual dysfunction.

The US imports 75% of its essential medicines from China and India, including antibiotics and treatments for diabetes and heart conditions. With the Trump tariffs kicking in, drug prices could be kicked up quite a few notches with millions of Americans experiencing a rude awakening. Of course, it's not just adults that are being drugged into oblivion. Boy, oh, boy, American boys are being given massive doses of drugs for ADHD, with over 21% of 14-year-old boys now suffering from this supposed condition.

As a result, prescriptions for Ritalin and Adderall have skyrocketed by 60% from 2012 to 2022, with boys aged 10 to 14 being the big demographic for these prescriptions. Most of the boys taking these drugs do not need them, as they are being treated for normal boyish behavior.

Sadly, an increasing percentage of US adults now believe that children are such a "burden" that they don't want to be parents at all. The percentage of non-parents who don't want any children increased from 14% in 2002 to 29% in 2023. During

the same period, the percentage of non-parents who plan to have children in the future fell from 79% to 59%. With that sort of negativism, we can't expect to have a positive outlook on the future. Sadly, millions of Americans have lost their optimism and faith in the future because their drugging habits have left them too down, depressed, and devoid of spirit to care.

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