

# Shock Treatment Should Be Banned

Psychiatry has a justly deserved bad rap. Until the second half of the Twentieth Century, psychiatry was generally viewed by physicians as the least credible area of practice, one where near exclusive subjectivity reigns. It was not until the pharmaceutical industry decided that psychiatry was a great, open field for the development of new classes of drugs that psychiatry became viewed as more mainstream within the profession. To support the creation of an extensive line of anti-psychotic and anti-depressant medications, the pharmaceutical industry worked in tandem with psychiatrists to label many conditions not previously identified as specific diseases as such. Once defined as a disease, any mental condition is then capable of having drugs approved for it.

Today, one in five Americans is on psychiatric drugs. That is greater than at any time in our history and greater drugging of the American populace than in any other country on earth. The abuses are legion, from kids whose normal activity for children is deemed hyperactivity disorder to adults whose loss of parents or spouses brings on an episode of depression, all are invited to take drugs that have awful side effects, from the shrinking of the brain, to the elimination of emotion, to the creation of new psychoses, to the onset of thoughts of violence or suicide. Many of the psychiatric drugs approved by the FDA have no proof of efficacy beyond placebo. Despite FDA's and the industry's contentions to the contrary, many are addictive.

With the growth of the psychiatric profession and the increasing promulgation of laws and decisions that force parents to accede to psychiatrists' demands for the drugging of their children as a condition precedent to public schooling, the field of psychiatry and the industry that

supports it have become leviathans. Lost in this rise is a true concern for the welfare of patients and, most importantly, an abandonment of the essential medical creed that demands practitioners to avoid harm.

No clearer example of the toxic industry-psychiatry union exists than in the case of electro-convulsive therapy, ECT, more commonly known as shock treatment. For decades the psychiatric profession proudly endorsed the "efficacy" of lobotomies, the insertion of metal objects into the prefrontal lobe of the brain to sever nerve pathways. At the age of 23 Rosemary Kennedy had a lobotomy following recommendations given to her parents that this "new medical procedure" in the late 1930's would calm their daughter and eliminate her mood swings. The effect was devastating, leaving her with the IQ of a 2 year old and incontinent. The Kennedys were devastated and deeply regretted the trust they placed in the psychiatrists who performed the procedure.

In the 1970s numerous nations banned lobotomies, as did many U.S. states, but a relic from that same era, shock therapy, continued on; indeed, today as many as an estimated 1 million shock therapy treatments are performed each year in the United States. The exact number is unknown because neither the federal government nor the state governments require medical reporting of the treatment.

Lobotomies are now widely accepted as barbaric and inefficacious, even by the psychiatric profession. But not so shock therapy. Psychiatrists, and even the American Psychiatric Association, tout it as beneficial, particularly in cases of "refractory" psychiatric treatment (i.e., when patients do not respond well to psychiatric medications).

Shock treatment involves the placement of electrodes on either side of the brain, near the temple. The unit is attached to an electrical source and then upwards of 450 or more volts of electricity are directed into the brain, ordinarily at longer

intervals based on age. Patients frequently undergo thirty or more treatment sessions wherein each time they are shocked. To endure the procedure without convulsions, patients are given sedatives and muscle relaxants and are strapped to a gurney. The treatment is barbaric and is favored in many brutal regimes worldwide as a form of torture.

The FDA allows this treatment despite never receiving proof of its safety or efficacy. Thrice, FDA asked the industry to supply scientific proof of the safety and efficacy of shock treatment, but each time the industry demurred, failing to submit the requested evidence. Despite that fact, FDA has done nothing to stop the proliferation of the devices and the expansive use of them by the psychiatric profession. The few groups that have attempted to gather data about ECT have discovered that it has been used in the United States on people of all ages from children to adults. The adverse effects are many and often profound. Those subjected to it have suffered from memory loss, atrial fibrillation, brain shrinkage, heart attack, stroke, visual impairment, loss of sense of smell, loss of sense of taste, myopathy (muscle weakness), and death. Many do not remember being married, do not recognize their spouses, do not recognize their children, do not remember how to play a musical instrument, do not remember how to practice their professions, etc.

There is no scientific evidence of the long-term safety or efficacy of ECT. By law, FDA is supposed to ensure that no drug or device is marketed without that proof, yet FDA has long classified ECT as a Class III (high risk) medical device.

Adding to the abandonment of protection of the public, FDA has recently proposed to allow ECT to be used more commonly in the United States by physicians. It has proposed to reclassify these barbaric instruments of torture from Class III (high risk) to Class II (intermediate risk). On behalf of patients who have suffered lifelong debilitation from shock treatment and with the great assistance of attorney Kendrick Moxon (who

has spent a lifetime researching ECT and has amassed an enormous body of evidence confirming its lack of safety and efficacy), my firm has petitioned FDA to stop the reclassification and urge the agency to revoke clearance for these dreadful machines.

© 2017 – Jonathan Emord – All Rights Reserved