

## **FALSE STUDIES TO SOLICIT FUNDS**

### **By Citizens Commission on Human Rights**

Internationally, soaring numbers of children are being drugged. This increase parallels the rising number of named mental disorders since the introduction in 1952 of the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV* (DSM-IV) and the mental disorders section of its counterpart, the *International Classification of Diseases* (ICD). (See Section 3, *Invented Disorders for Drug Profits* for more information.)

Based on the DSM, statistics are touted about near "epidemic" rates of mental illness in order to demand more funds. After World War II, one in 20 were said to be mentally ill. Yet rather than reduce this rate, a recent study reported in *Harvard Magazine* claims that 50% of the American population suffers a mental illness during their lifetime. Today, \$2 trillion (€1.57 trillion) is spent worldwide on mental health, \$100 billion (€78.7 billion) in the United States. For America, that represents a 2,567% increase, more than double the percentage increase (1,345%) spent by Medicare and Medicaid insurance on all medical care during the same period.<sup>1</sup>

Arthur Kleinman, professor of psychiatry, said claiming that every second person will suffer from mental illness during their life is "medicalizing ordinary unhappiness."<sup>2</sup> United Press International Senior Medical Correspondent Steve Mitchell said, "The trend, which is dubbed disease mongering" by the experts, "turns healthy people into patients, wastes precious resources, and causes iatrogenic [treatment caused] harm."<sup>3</sup>

In an article in *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Observer* editor Jim Windolf wrote that after sending away for the literature of dozens of advocacy agencies and mental health organizations, he tallied up the number of Americans allegedly suffering some kind of mental disorder. He reported, "If you believe the statistics, 77% of America's adult population is a mess....And we haven't even thrown in....road ragers and Internet addicts."<sup>4</sup>

Psychiatry's statistics are grossly exaggerated, says Melissa Raven, a lecturer in public health at Flinders University in Australia stating that the promotion of depression is "disease mongering," aimed to protect a multi-million dollar yearly market.<sup>5</sup>

The apparent epidemic of "mental illness" is because psychiatry, working with the pharmaceutical industry, invents new disorders almost every year. Take, for example, "Intermittent Explosive Disorder" (IED), often referred to as "Road Rage" and which

psychiatrists report afflicts one in 20, about 16 million Americans.<sup>6</sup> How, exactly, did psychiatrists come up with this? They conducted a survey. The survey asked American adults if they had ever experienced three anger outbursts in their entire life. Not surprisingly, a whole lot of people said they had. As one website explains, “From this flimsy evidence—and this alone!—the *Archives of General Psychiatry* (a medical journal that takes loads of money from drug companies) printed the survey results that hype this fictitious disease.”<sup>7</sup>

In September 2001, a U.S. Senate hearing on “Psychological Trauma and Terrorism” was told that, “Seventy-one percent of Americans said that they have felt depressed by the [9/11] attacks.”<sup>8</sup> It’s a worrying statistic, until one realizes that the survey was conducted during the six days after the 9/11 terrorist attacks when Americans were, naturally, in a state of shock. The survey sampled 1,200 people only, which, by some quantum leap, led to the conclusion that nearly three-quarters of Americans were mentally damaged, requiring “professional” help.

- Within days of the attacks, psychiatrists predicted that 30% of people affected would develop post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and asked for \$3 billion (€2.3 billion) to treat post 9/11 mental health problems in New York alone.<sup>9</sup>
- The New York State Office of Mental Health obtained a \$23 million (€18 million) grant from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), estimating that 1.5 million New Yorkers were in need of psychological services.
- As of June 2002, about 120,000 people only had sought assistance.
- Yet, the Office of Mental Health projected that 2 million New Yorkers would now need psychological counseling and FEMA announced a further \$132 million (€104 million)—a grant nearly six times as large as the first.
- A story in New York *Newsday* reported the project was a “waste of money.”<sup>10</sup>
- Three years after 9/11, the director of National Institute of Mental Health went to Congress, cap in hand, requesting \$82 million (€64 million) to add to NIMH’s already \$1.3 billion (€1 billion) annual budget, because “NIMH’s expertise” is “contributing to the Nation’s capacity to prepare for and respond effectively to the psychological impact of a bioterrorist attack.” Driving the point home, he said, “We know that we should expect to see increases in requests for therapy and medications for common and troubling symptoms of fear, anxiety, hyperarousal (excessive reactions), and sleep problems.”<sup>11</sup>
- Yet studies continued to confirm that there had been an overselling of the problem. A study published in *The American Journal of Psychiatry* determined that the use of mental health services in New York and Washington, the cities most directly affected by the attacks, did not increase. The study found that the events of Sept. 11

“had little impact on actual use of mental health services by a population with ready access and at high risk.”<sup>12</sup>

What did have an impact were psychotropic drug sales. Immediately following the attacks, new prescriptions for antidepressants in New York jumped 17% and prescriptions for anti-anxiety drugs rose 25%.

*TIME* warned that we shouldn't be “wandering off into [an antidepressant]-induced forgetfulness.”<sup>13</sup> Dr. Sally Satel, co-author of *One Nation Under Therapy*, advised against “sensationalizing mental health professionals” spreading gloom and doom about the American people's seeming lack of resilience, stating, “What we need—and thankfully seem to have—is a morally galvanized and focused citizenry, not a population turned inward on its alleged psychological fragility.”<sup>14</sup>

### “Disease Mongering”

Two months after the World Trade Center disaster, the Food and Drug Administration approved the antidepressant Paxil for treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder from which, as mentioned above, psychiatrists predicted a third of Americans affected by the terrorist attacks would suffer. About \$1.8 billion (€1.4 billion) of Paxil was sold in the United States over the following 10 months.<sup>15</sup>

Kelly O'Meara, a former Congressional staff and author of *Psyched Out: How Psychiatry Sells Mental Illness and Pushes Pills That Kill*, says the advertising campaigns of the psychiatric-pharmaceutical industry are used to convince people that their mental/emotional troubles are “abnormalities of the brain” requiring mind-altering drugs to correct them.<sup>16</sup>

Dr. Marcia Angell, former editor-in-chief of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, and now a senior lecturer at Harvard Medical School, argues that psychiatric diagnoses are so “vague and imprecise” that they have left the door open for pharmaceutical companies to “make diseases for drugs. If they can convince perfectly normal people that they have a problem, they can expand the drug market almost indefinitely.”<sup>17</sup>

Behind the alarming reports of mental illness gripping our nations are drug companies inventing diseases, placing healthy people at risk, according to a study in the respected journal *Public Library of Science Medicine* (PloS). “Disease-mongering” promotes non-existent diseases and exaggerates mild conditions in order to boost profits for the pharmaceutical industry, says study authors, Australians David Henry, of Newcastle University, and journalist Ray Moynihan.<sup>18</sup>

Iona Heath, a general practitioner at the Caversham Practice in London, UK, who contributed to the study, stated, “It is in the interests of pharmaceutical companies to extend the range of the abnormal so that the market for treatments is proportionately enlarged.”<sup>19</sup>

## SAD

Writing in London’s *Sunday Telegraph*, Mary Wakefield provided an example: “Here’s a textbook example of how the disease-mongering works, courtesy of GlaxoSmithKline. A few years ago, GSK needed to find a new application for one of its antidepressants, Paxil, in order to extend the patent. What to do? Easy—invent an ailment for it to cure. They found a brief mention of a little-known nervous condition—Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD)—in a psychiatric journal somewhere, and hired a PR firm to turn it into a star. The symptoms of SAD—feeling nervous, sweaty, shy at parties—don’t amount to much more than the symptoms of being alive, but it was marketed with a serious ad campaign and a catch-phrase: ‘Imagine being allergic to people.’

“The PR Company rounded up patients, experts, a celebrity sufferer and then presented the SAD story to the press. A new disease? With a famous name? How could an editor turn it down? *The New York Times* ran a long, serious feature and American *Vogue* followed suit. Instantly, of course, thousands of people decided that they suffered from SAD. Doctors prescribed Paxil, GSK thrived and the PR Company won an award for ‘Best PR Program of the year.’”<sup>20</sup>

Once the market has been saturated with advertisements about the prevalence of one disorder, another is promoted. First it’s “depression,” next “it could be bipolar disorder,” said Alan Cassels, a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria, Canada and co-author of *Selling Sickness: How the World’s Biggest Pharmaceutical Companies Are Turning Us All Into Patients*.

Cassels says, “The problem is not just that the disease is being packaged for us at every turn with these ‘awareness raising’ activities, but that the target drugs behind the bipolar marketing are...powerful, anti-psychotic treatments, capable of causing horrendous, sometimes irreversible, adverse effects in some people.”<sup>21</sup>

With \$76 billion (€60 billion) spent every year on psychiatric drugs internationally, and billions more in psychiatric research, one would and should expect an improving condition. However, after decades of psychiatric monopoly over the world’s mental health, their approach leads only to upwardly spiraling mental illness statistics, massive increases in people taking mind-altering drugs, escalating funding demands.

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- <sup>1</sup> Thomas Szasz, M.D., *Pharmacracy*, (Praeger Publishers, Westport, CT, 2001), p. 491.
- <sup>2</sup> Ashely Pettus, "Psychiatry by Prescription, Do psychotropic drugs blur the boundaries between illness and health?", *Harvard Magazine*, July-Aug. 2006.
- <sup>3</sup> Jeanyne Wanner, "The Selling of Suicide for Profit," *Voices*, 29 July 2006.
- <sup>4</sup> Christina Hoff Sommers, Sally Satel, M.D., *One Nation Under Therapy* (St. Martin's Press, New York, 2005), p. 3.
- <sup>5</sup> Adam Craswell, "Depression's toll exaggerated," *The Australian*, 11 Apr. 2006.
- <sup>6</sup> Ronald Kotulak, "Study: Explosive disorder affects 16 million," *The Tribune*, 5 June 2006.
- <sup>7</sup> Psychiatry and disease mongering: Road Rage Disorder is latest spontaneously "discovered" disease, *Newstarget.com*, 13 June 2006.
- <sup>8</sup> Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Hearing on "Psychological Trauma and Terrorism," Capitol Hearing Testimony, Federal Document Clearing House, 26 Sept. 2001.
- <sup>9</sup> Lucette Lagnado, "New York Rushes to Spend Grants For Counseling," *The Wall Street Journal*, 5 Oct. 2001.
- <sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.*, Hoff Sommers and Satel, pp. 198-199.
- <sup>11</sup> "Fiscal Year 2004 Presidents Budget Request for NIMH," Internet Address: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/about/2004budget.pdf>, Accessed: 22 Sept. 2006.
- <sup>12</sup> Erica Goode, "Calculating the Toll of Trauma," *The New York Times*, 9 Sept. 2003.
- <sup>13</sup> Lance Morrow, "The Case for Rage and Retribution," *TIME*, 11 Sept. 2001.
- <sup>14</sup> Sally Satel, M.D. and Christina Hoff Sommers, "Good Grief: Don't Get Taken by the Trauma Industry," *The Wall Street Journal*, 15 Oct. 2001.
- <sup>15</sup> Susan Edelman, "Darker Side to the 9/11 'Wonder' Pill," *New York Post*, 20 Oct. 2002.
- <sup>16</sup> Kelly Patricia O'Meara, *Psyched Out: How Psychiatry Sells Mental Illness and Pushes Pills That Kill*, (Author House, 2006), p. 109.
- <sup>17</sup> Kyung M. Song, "Medicating shyness and fear," *Seattle Times*, 22 Sept. 2004.
- <sup>18</sup> "Made-up diseases driven by new drugs promotions," *Daily Telegraph* (Australia), 12 Apr. 2006.
- <sup>19</sup> Ian Sample, "Companies exaggerating ailments, reports claim; Emphasis on minor illnesses 'may affect NHS'," *The Guardian* (London), 11 Apr. 2006.
- <sup>20</sup> Mary Wakefield, "For every pill, they invent another ill," *Sunday Telegraph*, 11 Sept. 2005; Wakefield is the assistant editor of the Spectator.
- <sup>21</sup> Alan Cassels, "Celebrities sell sickness," *Common Ground*, June 2006.