

Addictions to Paxil

Paxil is not listed as a controlled substance, such that one would sell all items at their disposal in order to obtain more of the drug. However, based on recent case histories, medical professionals explain that the withdrawal process can cause severe symptoms and should be carefully monitored. Especially patients who have tried to stop taking the medication cold turkey, have experienced severe withdrawal symptoms.

Withdrawal symptoms are often described as dizziness, headache, muscle spasms, tremors, electric shock-like sensations, nausea, diarrhea, flatulence, vivid dreams, agitation and other strange tingling or painful sensations, and these may be unlike any the individual had before. Sometimes withdrawal symptoms may appear to be similar to the original disorder such as depression, mood swings, irritability, confusion, fatigue, flu-like signs, insomnia or drowsiness, sweating, anxiety and nervousness.

More recent studies show that, unlike other selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI) drugs which are longer-acting, Paxil is a short-acting drug and thus causes chemistry changes in the body faster than other SSRIs drugs. It is this fast-acting process where the body chemistry changes so quickly that causes severe withdrawal symptoms when a patient abruptly stops taking Paxil.

Some patients have noted that by taking SSRI drugs they often feel that they are being held hostage by such medications. This is because having tried to stop taking the drugs abruptly, the withdrawal symptoms experienced are so frightening, that they have had to resume taking the prescribed doses of the medication. Psychiatrists explain that in order to overcome the more severe withdrawal symptoms, patients need to taper off the drug gradually by slowly reducing the prescribed amount until the patient eventually stops taking the drug completely. According to documented cases, tapering off SSRI drugs may last over a period of several months or even years; and even then, some people find that they cannot stop taking Paxil because the withdrawal symptoms are so painful.

Still, many lawsuits concerning addiction, dependence, and a severe withdrawal syndrome have been filed against GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), the manufacturer of Paxil. Since such lawsuits have been settled out of court and accompanied by confidential agreements among the parties, full disclosure of such litigations is avoided.

Researchers have acknowledged the potential for withdrawal reactions with all SSRIs. However, the confidential agreements executed during out-of-court settlements, do not allow the public at large, including the medical profession, to discover additional information relevant to the potential dangers of such drugs.

Nevertheless, documented cases also show that SSRI medications, including Paxil, have helped a great many people who suffered from various mental health problems such as chronic depression, anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and even eating disorders.

Often primary-care physicians in managed care facilities especially are pressured to provide the least cost alternative for mental health patients. This results in prescribing medications for such patients without too much in-depth analysis as to the actual need of the patient. Books written by well respected mental health professionals point out that, in mental health diagnosis, it takes time to establish a doctor-patient relationship so that appropriate treatment may be applied.

Although prescribed to millions of people throughout the world, mental health professionals state that SSRI drugs such as Paxil are relatively new and need to be studied in a more systematic way. This is especially true in view of the continued secret agreements between GSK and discontented users of such prescribed medications.

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